Head Writer/Coordinator
Sean McQuaid
Writers
Jeff Christiansen, Anthony Flamini, Michael Hoskin, Mark O'English, Stuart Vandal, Ronald Byrd, Madison Carter & Chad Anderson

Cover Art
Aaron Lopresti & Chris Sotomayor

Art Reconstruction
Pond Scum
Select Coloring
Tom Smith

Editors
Jeff Youngquist & Jennifer Grünwald
Associate Editor
Mark D. Beazley
Assistant Editors
Michael Short & Cory Levine
Senior Vice President of Sales
David Gabriel
Production
Jerron Quality Color
Vice President of Creative
Tom Marvelli

Editor in Chief
Joe Quesada
Publisher
Dan Buckley

For more of our many Avengers-related profiles, see the following Handbooks:

Ant-Man (Lang) - Avengers 2004, Book of the Dead 2004
Avengers (MC2) - ANOHotMU #1
Avengers - Avengers 2005, Teams 2005, Marvel Legacy: 1960s, Marvel Legacy: 1970s, Marvel Legacy: 1980s, Marvel Legacy: 1990s
Avengers Mansion - Avengers 2004
Avengers Quinjets - Avengers 2004
Avengers Roster - Avengers 2004
Beast - X-Men 2004
Black Knight (Whitman) - Avengers 2005
Black Panther - Avengers 2004, Marvel Knights 2005
Black Widow (Romanova) - Daredevil 2004
Brandon, Moira - Marvel Legacy: 1990s
Cage, Luke - Marvel Knights 2005
Captain America (Rogers) - Golden Age 2004, Marvel Legacy: 1960s, Avengers 2004, A-Z Update #2
Captain Britain (Leigh) - Avengers 2004
Captain Marvel (Mar-Vell) - Marvel Legacy: 1960s, Marvel Legacy: 1970s, Book of the Dead 2004
Captain Marvel (Rambeau) - Marvel Legacy: 1980s
Crystal - Women of Marvel 2005
Darkhawk - Marvel Legacy: 1990s
Deathcry - ANOHotMU #3
Demolition Man - ANOHotMU #3
Doctor Druid - Golden Age 2004
Doctor Strange - Marvel Knights 2005
Echo - Daredevil 2004
Falcon - Avengers 2004
Firebird - Avengers 2005
Firestar - Women of Marvel 2005
Gilgamesh - Book of the Dead 2004
Great Lakes Avengers - Avengers 2005
Guardians of the Galaxy - Alternate Universes 2005
Hellcat - Women of Marvel 2005
Hercules - Avengers 2004, Marvel Legacy: 1980s
Hulk - Marvel Legacy: 1960s, Hulk 2004
Human Torch (Hammond) - Golden Age 2004
Invisible Woman - Fantastic Four 2005
Iron Fist - Marvel Knights 2005
Iron Man (Teen Tony) - Marvel Legacy: 1990s
Jack of Hearts - Avengers 2004
Jarvis, Edwin - Avengers 2004
Jocasta - Avengers 2005
Jones, Rick - Hulk 2004
Justice - Avengers 2005
Last Avengers Story - Alternate Universes 2005
Living Lightning - Avengers 2005
Machine Man - ANOHotMU #6
Magdalene - ANOHotMU #6
Mantis - Avengers 2005
Mister Fantastic - Fantastic Four 2005
Mockingbird - Book of the Dead 2004
Moon Knight - Marvel Knights 2005
Moondragon - Women of Marvel 2005
Namor - Golden Age 2004, Marvel Legacy: 1960s, Avengers 2004, A-Z Update #3
Nomad (Rogers) - Marvel Legacy: 1970s
Power Man (Cage) - Marvel Legacy: 1970s
Pulsar (Monica Rambeau) - Avengers 2005
Quasar (Vaughn) - Avengers 2004, A-Z Update #1
Quicksilver - Avengers 2004, ANOHotMU #9
Rage - Avengers 2005
Rhodes, Jim - Avengers 2005
Sandman - Spider-Man 2004
Scarlet Witch - Avengers 2004, Women of Marvel 2005
Sentry (Reynolds) - Avengers 2005, ANOHotMU #9
Sersi - Women of Marvel 2005
She-Hulk - Marvel Legacy: 1980s, Avengers 2004
Silverclaw - Avengers 2005
Spider-Man - Marvel Legacy: 1960s, Marvel Legacy: 1980s, Marvel Legacy: 1990s, Spider-Man 2004, Spider-Man 2005, Spider-Man: Back in Black 2007
Spider-Woman (Carpenter) - Avengers 2005
Spider-Woman (Drew) - Women of Marvel 2005, Avengers 2005
Starfox - Avengers 2005
Stingray - A-Z Update #3
Swordsman (Duquesne) - Book of the Dead 2004
Swordsman (Jarvert) - A-Z Update #2
Thing - Fantastic Four 2005
Thor - Marvel Legacy: 1960s, Marvel Legacy: 1980s, Avengers 2004, Book of the Dead 2004
Thunderstrike - Book of the Dead 2004
Tigra - Avengers 2004
Triathlon - Avengers 2005
Two-Gun Kid (Hawk) - ANOHotMU #11
U.S. Agent - Avengers 2004
Vision (Victor Shade) - Avengers 2004, Book of the Dead 2004
Walker, Patsy - Marvel Legacy: 1960s
Wasp - Avengers 2004
Whizzer (Frank) - Golden Age 2004
Wolverine - Marvel Legacy: 1980s, X-Men 2004, Wolverine 2004
Yellowjacket (DeMara) - Book of the Dead 2004
Yellowjacket (Pym) - Avengers 2004
Young Avengers - Avengers 2005

The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe Frequently Asked Questions page — including data corrections and explanations, complete bibliographies, and Power Grid legends:
http://www.marvel.com/universe/OHOTMU

Special thanks to the guys at the Appendix (www.marvunapp.com), Kevin Brackett, Mike Fichera, Jeff Parker, Tom Brevoort, Giuseppe Mainardi, Joe Quesada, Brian Reed, David Wiltfong, Will Uchtman, Young Nam Heller & www.g-mart.com. Also, Sean McQuaid dedicates his work on this book in loving memory of Charles & Ellen MacDonald and Bast.

MIGHTY AVENGERS: MOST WANTED FILES. First printing 2007. Published by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Copyright © 2007 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. $3.99 per copy in the U.S. and $4.75 in Canada (GST #R127032852) in the direct market and $4.99 per copy in the U.S. and $7.00 in Canada (GST #R127032852) through the newsstand; Canadian Agreement #40668537. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. **Printed in Canada.** ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Toys & Publishing Divisions and CMO Marvel Entertainment, Inc.; DAVID GABRIEL, Senior VP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, VP of Business Affairs & Editorial Operations; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM BOYLE, VP of Publishing Operations; TIAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Managing Editor; SUSAN CRESPI, Production Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Joe Maimone, Advertising Director, at jmaimone@marvel.com or 212-576-8534.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

HISTORY: Shunned by his fellow gods and even his own father Zeus as one of the most hateful Olympians, Ares constantly yearned to serve alongside the "Gods of Light" who ruled from atop Mount Olympus. During the Trojan War, in which the Mycenaean Greeks attacked the city of Troy in Asia Minor during the 13th century B.C., Ares initially fought on behalf of the Trojans; battling the Greek warrior Diomedes, he was repelled by Athena, who had guided Diomedes' sword. Ares later rejoined the battle and stood alongside the Greek warrior Achilles, serving as the demigod's patron lord of war ever since. With the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire during the 4th century A.D., Zeus allowed the worship of the Olympians to die out, forbidding Ares to act as the patron god of warriors and causing dissatisfaction with Zeus' rule over the centuries. At some point the ancient goddess Nox posed as Venus, seducing Ares and then bearing his children, Deimos and Phobos.

In modern times, when Pluto tricked Hercules into taking his place as Lord of Hades, Hercules sought his half-brother Ares' help. Hating Hercules' blustering manner and close relationship with Zeus, Ares refused, but the Asgardian thunder god Thor helped release Hercules from Pluto's contract. Later, Ares and Asgardian sorceress Amora the Enchantress tricked Hercules into drinking from the Fountain of Eros, compelling him to fall madly in love with Amora. The Enchantress pitted Hercules against the Avengers, who soon released him from her spell; however, Ares had already convinced Zeus that Hercules had renounced his Olympian heritage for the love of an Asgardian, and Zeus banished Hercules from Olympus for a year. Joining the Avengers during his exile on Earth, Hercules eventually helped free the Olympians, whom Typhon the Titan had banished to the Land of Shades by extinguishing the Promethean Flame which sustained them; Zeus forgave Hercules and ended his exile, infuriating Ares. Once again allied with the Enchantress, Ares used Merlin's cursed Ebony Blade to extinguish the Promethean Flame and transform the Olympian gods to crystal; this did not affect demigods such as Hercules, whom Ares threw off Mount Olympus. Ares then traveled to Earth as "Mr. Tallon" and founded the militant Warhawk organization, using the entrancing music of Olympian satyrs to incite his followers to violence in hopes of creating a nuclear war that would open a portal to the halls of Asgard. When the Avengers thwarted his plan, Ares fled to Olympus and had an amnesiac Hercules brought there. As a small strike force of Avengers stormed Olympus to stop Ares, his hordes of Olympian beasts and demigods invaded Earth, where the remaining Avengers opposed them until Ares was defeated and forced to return the Ebony Blade to the Black Knight (Dane Whitman).

Venus angered Ares when she visited Earth, seeking to avert a war he had engineered. She teamed with Namor the Sub-Mariner to defeat Ares, weakening him with rays emitted by her enchanted girdle Cestus and forcing him to end the war and return to Olympus. Ares next plotted with Pluto to start a war between Asgard and Olympus by abducting the Asgardian valkyrior Krista while disguised as Hercules and absconding with her to Hades. After the witch Chaga told Thor and Hercules that Ares was the culprit, they defeated him at the Gates of Hades and rescued Krista from Pluto's clutches. Later, when a newly-formed alliance with his fellow Hell-Lords gave Pluto the power to challenge Olympus, he demanded that Zeus arrange marriages of Venus and Hercules to Ares and Amazon Queen Hippolyta, both trusted friends of Hades; since Olympian law forbade acting against one's own spouse, this double marriage would have constrained the only two Olympians capable of preventing Pluto's planned takeover of Olympus. The Olympian Huntsman and the Titan Menoetius were dispatched to bring Venus and Hercules to Olympus, where Zeus reluctantly decreed that they be married to Ares and Hippolyta. After the heroic Champions of Los Angeles interrupted the ceremony and informed Zeus of Pluto's plan to overthrow him, Zeus called off the weddings and again banished Pluto.

Ares next entered into a wager with his mother, Hera, to see who could bring the most sorrow to Hercules' life. Jealous of Hercules' friendship with

REAL NAME: Ares
ALIASES: Mars (Roman name), John Aaron, Mr. Tallon, Warhawk
IDENTITY: Known to SHIELD authorities
OCCUPATION: God of War, registered super hero; former construction worker, carpenter
CITIZENSHIP: Olympus
PLACE OF BIRTH: Olympus
KNOWN RELATIVES: Alexander (son), Deimos, Phobos (sons, deceased), Monstro (alleged son), Harmonia (daughter), Zeus (father), Hera (mother), Hephaestus (brother), Athena, Hebe (sisters), Apollo, Dionysus, Hercules, Hermes (half-brothers), Aphrodite/Venus, Artemis, Persephone (half-sisters), Neptune/Poseidon, Pluto (uncles), Demeter, Vesta (aunts), Chronus (grandfather), Rhea (grandmother), Ouranos (great-grandfather); Gaea (great-grandmother); numerous other relatives
GROUP AFFILIATION: Avengers, the Initiative, Olympian gods; formerly the Warhawks
EDUCATION: Tutored by Olympian scholars
FIRST APPEARANCE: (Mars) Human Torch Comics #5A (1941); (Ares) Thor #129 (1966)

Art by Frank Cho

the Avengers, Ares possessed the body of the new Thor (Eric Masterson) and attacked Hercules in an attempt to force his half-brother to kill his friend; but a lightning bolt summoned by Thor's hammer exposed Ares' involvement and ruined his plan. Ares later conspired with Pluto to kill a temporarily insane Thor; however, Thor's madness made him a fiercer combatant, and he savagely defeated Ares. Pluto returned to Olympus with the wounded Ares and informed Zeus that Thor had attacked them without provocation; but the Asgardian shield maiden Sif refuted this allegation and challenged Pluto to trial by combat before appealing to Ares' sense of warrior's honor, convincing him to reveal the truth.

Hera later enacted her half of the wager with Ares by impersonating Hercules' ex-girlfriend Taylor Madison. Hoping to win his father's good graces, Ares informed Zeus of this; Ares and Zeus then descended to Earth, exposing Hera's scheme before she could kill the Avengers and revealing that the original Taylor Madison was merely a magical construct created by Zeus to force Hera's hand. Ares next returned to Earth to reorganize the Warhawks as a terrorist organization, slaughtering diplomats at international peace and economic summits in order to exploit their deaths and ignite the flames of global war. He attacked Hercules at the New York Museum of Greek Antiquity in order to draw his half-brother into the conflict and steal the Heart of Athena, an ancient artifact empowered by Zeus that geometrically magnified any force projected through it. Hercules immediately accepted an offer to join SHIELD in order to stop his brother; but while Hercules and his SHIELD strike force raided Ares' base in the jungles of South America, Ares and his Warhawks took control of a SHIELD Helicarrier. Ares used the Heart of Athena to construct a sonic canon known as the Gabriel Horn aboard the Helicarrier, which was intended to cause the structural breakdown of all metal on Earth so that society would devolve into warring feudal clans; however, Hercules and his SHIELD allies defeated Ares before the Gabriel Horn could be activated.

When Pluto again sought to conquer Olympus, the battle between Pluto and the Olympians had reached a stalemate until Zeus summoned Ares to turn the tide in the Olympians' favor. Ares crushed Pluto's hellish armies, dismembering the bodies of the fallen enemy soldiers so that they would never be complete, even in death; but when Ares returned to Olympus expecting to be accepted by his fellow Olympians at last, he learned that his brethren still looked down upon him and deeply regretted having needed Ares' assistance to win the war.

Dejected, Ares finally realized he would never be considered one of Olympus' Gods of Light and abandoned his duties as God of War. He began living on Earth as a mortal man, adopting the identity of carpenter/construction worker "John Aaron" and selling a few rare Greek artifacts to become financially comfortable. He fathered a son named Alexander with a mortal woman but resolved never to let his son learn of his divine heritage or meet his mother, fearing that a woman's influence would make Alexander weak. Unlike his ancient sons Deimos & Phobos, whom he viewed more as spawn than children, Ares grew emotionally attached to the innocent and compassionate Alexander. Settling in New Jersey, Ares nurtured his son's aggressive tendencies as Alexander attended elementary school; all the while, Zeus watched Ares' actions from above, noticing that Ares' mortal guise had taught him humility. When the Asgardian gods fell during Ragnarok and the Japanese god of evil, Amatsu Mikaboshi, attacked the Olympians during their perceived time of weakness, a desperate Zeus had Hermes abduct Alexander to ensure that Ares would again assist the Olympians in their darkest hour.

Hermes transported Alexander to the stronghold of Achilles' warriors, the Myrmidon, for safekeeping, but Mikaboshi abducted Alexander following the Myrmidon's defeat and the destruction of the Hall of Achilles. Believing that Alexander was destined to kill his father and become the new Olympian God of War, Mikaboshi revealed to Alexander his true Olympian heritage after determining that it would be best to keep the boy as a pawn. Meanwhile, Ares reluctantly joined forces with the Olympians as Mikaboshi's forces breached the walls of Olympus. As the war raged on for five additional Olympian years, there were many casualties, including Deimos and Phobos, as well as Zeus himself (although Ares did not grieve any of them). Ares and his Olympian warriors finally reached the massive gates that guarded the Japanese underworld where they were attacked by Alexander, whom Mikaboshi had turned against his father. After nearly killing Ares in a one-on-one battle, Alexander was freed from Mikaboshi's corruption by Zeus' dying breath, striking down Mikaboshi with the legendary Grasscutter Sword and helping the Olympians achieve victory.

Still insistent that Alexander have a mortal upbringing, Ares returned to his life as a construction worker in Dover, New Jersey, where he worked at the time of the enactment of the Superhuman Registration Act. Immediately following the super hero Civil War over this legislation, Iron Man (Tony Stark) and Ms. Marvel (Carol Danvers) traveled to Ares' construction site to recruit him for their new Avengers team. Angered that the heroes had ruined his civilian cover, Ares eventually agreed to join the team after Iron Man threatened to deport him to Olympus if he did not register with the U.S. government.

Art by Paul Smith

HEIGHT: 6'1"
WEIGHT: 500 lbs.
EYES: Brown
HAIR: Brown

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: As an immortal Olympian god, Ares possesses vast strength (lifting up to 70 tons) and endurance. Physically superior to most Olympian gods, he has virtually inexhaustible stamina and does not tire appreciably after any exertion. Like all Olympians, Ares is immortal, possessing a life essence that cannot be terminated by conventional means. Although he can be wounded in battle, his godly life force gives him incredible recuperative abilities. He can fully recover from penetration wounds (such as by blades or bullets) in anywhere from minutes to hours, depending on the wound's severity. He has even been known to set himself on fire in battle and hurl himself at his opponents as a living fireball. Only an injury sufficient to vaporize him or disperse a major portion of his bodily molecules could cause him physical death. Even then, his life essence may still endure.

Originally, Ares' skill was limited to the use of all implements of war used in the time of ancient Greece and Rome, such as javelins, axes, swords and flails. Over the years, however, he has mastered all forms of weaponry, both modern and ancient. His personal arsenal consists of swords and axes from Ancient Greece, Celtic spears, Roman helmets, Middle Eastern scimitars, Arthurian swords, a Native American axe and various firearms. While on Earth, Ares uses a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle for transportation.

POWER GRID 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- INTELLIGENCE
- STRENGTH
- SPEED
- DURABILITY
- ENERGY PROJECTION
- FIGHTING SKILLS

ACTIVE MEMBERS: Ares, Black Widow (Natalia Romanova), Iron Man (Tony Stark), Ms. Marvel (Carol Danvers), Sentry (Bob Reynolds), Wasp (Janet Van Dyne), Wonder Man (Simon Williams)
INACTIVE MEMBERS: Arachne (Julia Carpenter), Beast (Hank McCoy), Black Knight (Dane Whitman), Black Panther (T'Challa), Crystal (Crystalia Maximoff), Darkhawk (Chris Powell), Demolition Man (Dennis Dunphy), Falcon (Sam Wilson), Firebird (Bonita Juarez), Firestar (Angelica Jones), Hellcat (Patsy Walker), Hercules (Heracles), Justice (Vance Astrovik), Living Lightning (Miguel Santos), Mantis, Moondragon (Heather Douglas), Monica Rambeau, Sersi, She-Hulk (Jen Walters), Silverclaw (Lupe Santiago), Starfox (Eros), Stingray (Walt Newell), Sub-Mariner (Namor McKenzie), Tigra (Greer Nelson), Triathlon (Delroy Garrett Jr.), Two-Gun Kid (Matt Hawk), U.S.Agent (John Walker), War Machine (Jim Rhodes), Yellowjacket (Hank Pym)
OUTLAW MEMBERS: Luke Cage (born Carl Lucas), Doctor Strange (Stephen Strange), Echo (Maya Lopez), Iron Fist (Daniel Rand), Ronin (Clint Barton), Spider-Man (Peter Parker), Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew), Wolverine (James Howlett)
FORMER MEMBERS: Ant-Man (Scott Lang), Captain America (Steve Rogers), Captain Britain (Lionheart, Kelsey Leigh), Doctor Druid (Anthony Ludgate Druid), Gilgamesh (a.k.a. Forgotten One), Hulk (Bruce Banner), Human Torch (Jim Hammond), Invisible Woman (Sue Richards), Iron Man (alternate-timeline teenage Tony Stark), Jack of Hearts (Jonathan Hart), Machine Man (X-51), Mister Fantastic (Reed Richards), Mockingbird (Bobbi Barton), Moon Knight (Marc Spector), Quasar (Wendell Vaughn), Quicksilver (Pietro Maximoff), Rage (Elvin Halliday), Sandman (William Baker), Scarlet Witch (Wanda Maximoff), Swordsman (Jacques Duquesne), Thing (Ben Grimm), Thor, Thunderstrike (Eric Masterson), Vision (Victor Shade)
HONORARY MEMBERS: Aleta (Aleta Ogord), Moira Brandon, Captain Marvel (Mar-Vell), Charlie-27, Deathcry, Jocasta, Rick Jones, Magdalene, Major Victory (Vance Astro), Marrina (Marrina Smallwood), Martinex (Martinex T'Naga), Masque (Whitney Frost bio-duplicate), Nikki (Nicholette Gold), Starhawk (Stakar Ogord), Swordsman (Phillip Jarvert), Whizzer (Bob Frank), Yellowjacket (Rita DeMara), Yondu (Yondu Udonta)
BASE OF OPERATIONS: (Registered team) Stark Tower (a.k.a. Avengers Tower), midtown Manhattan, New York; (outlaw team) Doctor Strange's Sanctum Santorum, 177A Bleecker Street, Greenwich Village, New York; formerly Avengers Mansion, 890 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan, New York; a deep space monitoring station in the asteroid belt between the planets Mars and Jupiter; Avengers Headquarters, Manhattan, New York; Avengers Compound, 1800 Palos Verdes Drive, Palos Verdes, California; Avengers Park, Manhattan, New York; Avengers Island (a.k.a. Hydrobase); a leased floor of office space in Four Freedoms Plaza; Avengers Emergency Headquarters, somewhere outside New York City
FIRST APPEARANCE: Avengers #1 (1963)

HISTORY: Long acclaimed as Earth's mightiest heroes, the Avengers were founded by Thor, Iron Man, Ant-Man (Hank Pym), Wasp and Hulk after they first assembled to defeat the Asgardian god of evil, Loki. The unstable Hulk soon resigned, but the group has gradually expanded into the world's largest and most formidable professional superhero team. Endorsed by American and international authorities, the team was initially funded by wealthy industrialist Tony Stark, a.k.a. Avengers founder Iron Man; Stark later established the charitable Maria Stark Foundation as the group's principal financial support. The Avengers are usually based in Manhattan, where the Stark family home became the group's first headquarters, Avengers Mansion. An additional western roster also operated out of Avengers Compound in California for several years before shutting down. In Milwaukee, several novice heroes started their own unauthorized "Great Lakes Avengers" team and later became associates of the true Avengers, but the Maria Stark Foundation recently ordered them to stop using the Avengers name. The Avengers' longest-serving civilian employee is Stark family butler Edwin Jarvis, who stayed on at Avengers Mansion when the team took over the property.

The team's senior members — Thor, Iron Man, Pym, Wasp, and Captain America, who was retroactively declared a founder after replacing the Hulk — have special authority over team operations; for instance, one or more founders usually lead the group in reorganizing after periods during which the team has disbanded. Also, during times of crisis or shortages of experienced members, a founder has sometimes been designated to serve as fulltime team leader indefinitely. The group is usually led by an elected chairperson. Originally a rotating administrative post shared in turn by all active members, the chairmanship later became a fulltime elected leadership position.

When the Triune Understanding philosophical movement waged a smear campaign against the Avengers, then-chairman Captain America stepped down and the more media-savvy Wasp took over as chair, leading a revamped roster that included new recruit and Triune spokesman Triathlon. Wasp's public relations expertise and Triathlon's presence helped repair the team's image, and Triathlon gradually became a dedicated Avenger despite his Triune loyalties, even helping topple corrupt Triune founder Jonathan Tremont. Meanwhile, Jarvis' foreign foster daughter "Lupe" Santiago became an Avengers reservist as the shape-shifter Silverclaw, and half-alien powerhouse Jack of Hearts helped the Avengers save the galaxy from the Infinites.

The Avengers soon reorganized under co-chairs Captain America and Wasp, devoting more resources to surveillance, monitoring, undercover work and investigation, striving for earlier detection and neutralization of major threats. In addition to its active members and reserves, the group began fielding "detached service" members given ongoing assignments separate from the active roster, such as a team assembled to man a deep-space monitoring station. Elsewhere in space, several Avengers teamed with long-lost member Mantis and troubled hero Haywire on a celestial quest to save Mantis' son Quoi.

When Kang the Conqueror and his Scarlet Centurion (Marcus) waged an all-out war of conquest against Earth, the Avengers led Earth's defenses.

REGISTERED AVENGERS VS. OUTLAW AVENGERS

Art by Leinil Francis Yu

During the war, Jack of Hearts joined the team, Avengers government liaison Duane Freeman died in Kang's assault on Washington, and Hank Pym resumed his controversial costumed guise as Yellowjacket. Kang actually conquered Earth for a time, but an Avengers-led resistance soon overthrew the Kang Dynasty and liberated the planet. Shortly thereafter, the mysterious villain Scorpio began spiriting away the world's national capitals, and the United Nations turned to the Avengers to serve as an emergency global authority and peacekeeping force. Once Scorpio was defeated and the capitals restored, a grateful United Nations granted the Avengers sovereignty comparable to that of an independent country, empowering Avengers members to act as diplomatic representatives of the superhero community and declaring Avengers Mansion the Avengers Embassy. Key allies during the Scorpio crisis included long-adversarial government official Henry Peter Gyrich, who made peace with the group and became their new United Nations liaison; and the new Ant-Man (Scott Lang), a longtime ally who joined the team officially. The increasingly unstable Jack of Hearts feuded bitterly with Lang until Jack helped rescue Scott's daughter, Cassie Lang, from child killer Charles Cooley, then impulsively blew himself up along with Cooley. Jack was replaced by a new Captain Britain (Kelsey Leigh), an English single mother mystically reborn as a superhuman champion after sacrificing her life to aid the Avengers.

After mentoring the reformed villains known as the Thunderbolts, Hawkeye rejoined the Avengers, who distrusted the Thunderbolts despite Hawkeye's faith in them. Thanks to the Avengers' interference, the Thunderbolts' risky energy-collecting Liberator project ended in disaster, and the Thunderbolts broke up. The sonic-powered Songbird had acted as the Avengers' mole within the Thunderbolts, but was so disillusioned by the Avengers' underhanded tactics that she refused an offer of Avengers membership, helping rebuild the Thunderbolts instead.

When an insane Scarlet Witch turned her reality-warping powers against the team, she apparently slew Hawkeye, Vision, Ant-Man (Lang) and a reanimated Jack of Hearts. She also destroyed Avengers Mansion, and the Stark fortune was by now too depleted to rebuild. Thoroughly demoralized, the surviving Avengers disbanded; however, months later, ex-Avengers Captain America, Iron Man and Spider-Man teamed with Luke Cage, Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew), Daredevil and the Sentry to contain a mass breakout at the super-criminal prison known as the Raft. Viewing this as fate, Captain America invited his six allies to join him in rebuilding the Avengers. Most of them soon accepted, though the mentally ill Sentry had gone into seclusion and Daredevil declined to join.

Leading intelligence agency SHIELD was reluctant to sanction a new Avengers team, but Captain America's "full champion license" empowered him to assemble any team needed for any given mission, so the group ignored SHIELD's disapproval. Iron Man provided the top floors of his Stark Tower skyscraper as the team's headquarters (staffed by ever-faithful Jarvis), and the group resolved to recapture the forty-odd Raft escapees — starting with Sauron, whose liberation by Electro had touched off the jailbreak. Capturing Electro and tracking Sauron to the Savage Land, the new Avengers teamed with infamous mutant adventurer Wolverine to oppose an illegal Vibranium mining operation run by Sauron's Savage Land Mutates and a rogue SHIELD faction. In the end, a retaliatory strike by the mainstream SHIELD organization wiped out the entire mining operation except for a recaptured Sauron, conveniently eliminating almost all evidence and witnesses apart from the Avengers. Shaken by this, and by their discovery that the Raft had been stockpiling supposedly deceased super-criminals for unknown purposes, the new Avengers secretly dedicated themselves to rooting out the institutional corruption behind these events; to this end, they recruited Wolverine, whose espionage background and ruthless attitude were seen as necessary assets for their new mission.

The group also recruited Sentry, helping him achieve relative mental stability and merging his unearthly Watchtower headquarters with Stark Tower. When the Avengers took an interest in the evolving Japanese criminal underworld, Daredevil refused to join their investigation but recommended Echo (Maya Lopez) to serve in his place; she became the team's secret agent in Japan in her new, seemingly male disguise as the martial artist Ronin. Meanwhile, the Avengers also began mentoring the Young Avengers, a team of Avengers-inspired underage adventurers who had first assembled while the senior Avengers were disbanded. The mad Scarlet Witch soon struck again, this time restructuring the entire world into a mutant-dominated "House of M" reality ruled by her family; various Avengers helped form that world's resistance movement until she restored conventional reality.

The Avengers were among the many heroes who debated the new federal Superhuman Registration Act (SHRA), hastily passed after the New Warriors accidentally helped cause mass fatalities during a battle in Stamford, Connecticut. A superhero civil war soon erupted, with Iron Man leading the pro-SHRA faction while Captain America led the anti-SHRA resistance, an underground "Secret Avengers" army composed of various Avengers and many other heroes. Luke Cage, Spider-Woman and most of the Young Avengers sided with Captain America, while Sentry and Spider-Man sided with Iron Man; Spider-Man, however, soon defected to the Secret Avengers, disillusioned by the oppressive and unethical tactics of the pro-SHRA forces. During the final battle between the two factions, Captain America's army was winning until ordinary citizens came to the fallen Iron Man's defense, forcing the Captain to realize that the general public supported the SHRA. Unwilling to risk further death and destruction without the support of the American people, Captain America surrendered to the authorities and ordered his Secret Avengers to stand down.

Most of the anti-SHRA heroes abandoned the resistance and registered with the government's new nationwide Initiative superhero program, run by Iron Man in his new role as SHIELD director Tony Stark and staffed by various other Avengers veterans such as Yellowjacket, War Machine and Justice. Any rebels who registered were granted amnesty, but a small handful of heroes have continued the resistance, notably an outlaw Avengers roster led by Luke Cage. Initially consisting of Spider-Man, Spider-Woman, Wolverine and new members Iron Fist and Doctor Strange, Cage's team has since recruited Echo and a new Ronin (Clint Barton) — the former Hawkeye, secretly resurrected during the Scarlet Witch's "House of M" reality warps. These outlaw Avengers have been further embittered and radicalized by the apparent death of Captain America, who was assassinated by agents of the Red Skull while in custody. Meanwhile, Stark has organized a new government-backed, pro-SHRA Avengers roster (nicknamed "the Mighty Avengers") led by Ms. Marvel, with a roster including Stark, Sentry, Wasp, Wonder Man, Black Widow, and new recruit Ares. How the ongoing conflict between the two Avengers factions will ultimately play out remains to be seen.

ANT-MAN
(SCOTT LANG)

CAPTAIN BRITAIN
(KELSEY LEIGH)

ECHO

JACK OF HEARTS

SILVERCLAW

TRIATHLON

HISTORY: Born circa 1939, Natalia "Natasha" Romanova was apparently orphaned at an early age in 1941, when she was trapped in a burning building during an early Nazi attack on Stalingrad. Ivan Petrovitch Bezukhov, a Soviet soldier searching for signs of his dead sister, saw Natasha in the inferno and rushed to her rescue. Escaping the USSR, the pair surfaced months later in Madripoor. The ninja Hand cult abducted Natasha, hoping to raise her as a master assassin. Aided by Captain America and the Madripoor adventurer Logan (later Wolverine), Ivan rescued his charge. Little is known of Ivan and Natasha's further wartime adventures, nor is there any record of why Ivan aged so slowly in the ensuing decades.

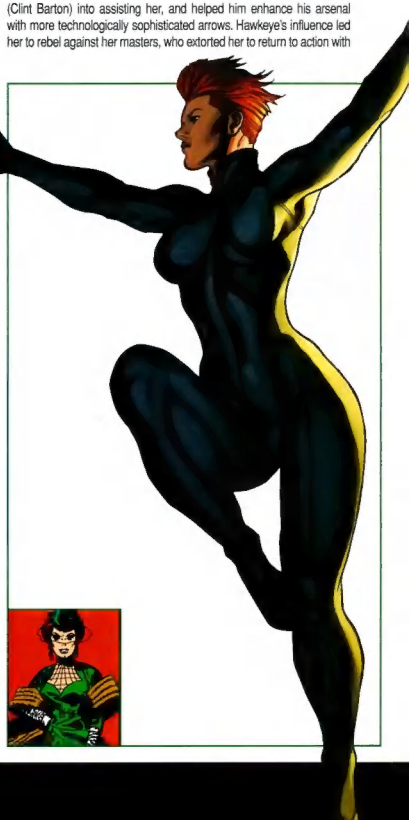
Circa 1956 or later, Natasha, now in the custody of a master spy called Taras Romanov, was reunited with Logan, his memories erased following government service. Logan studied espionage under Taras for two years, also training Natasha in hand-to-hand combat. Although Natasha regarded Logan as a surrogate father, Taras instructed her to kill Logan to complete her training. Logan instead killed Taras, which had been his own true assignment, allowing Natasha to depart in hopes she would escape the life Taras intended for her. Later, while still at least appearing to be in her teens, Natasha was recruited for the USSR's Black Widow Program, in which she and other orphan girls were conditioned to be sleeper agents for eventual deployment throughout the world. Supervised by scientist Lyudmila Kudrin, the young Black Widows' physiologies were biochemically enhanced to near-superhuman levels through a process sometimes referred to as a Super-Soldier Serum variant, slowing her physical aging as well. Still not operational as an intelligence agent, Natasha befriended would-be reformer Andre Rostov; she also befriended an older married couple whom she regarded as surrogate parents. She briefly studied ballet with famed Bolshoi instructor Oksana Bolishinko, prompting Natasha's programmer, Grigor Ivanovich, to give her false memories of studies at the Belshivoi Art Institute in Moscow and a subsequent career in ballet, not only to conceal her brainwashing but also to instill a subconscious devotion to her homeland. After unrevealed activities, Natasha was allowed to live a seemingly normal life in Russian society, from which she could be awakened by her conditioning as necessary. At some point, whether through chance or government manipulation, she met and married Alexi Shostakov, an exceptional test pilot who carried out some of Russia's most dangerous assignments.

When Shostakov was assigned to become the national hero called Red Guardian, communist extremists faked his death, prompting Natasha, her memories of the Black Widow Program still buried, to volunteer as an intelligence operative. Her already formidable skills were further heightened by extensive training under Alexi Bruskin and others in the government's Red Room Academy, where she was also brainwashed to sabotage the U.S. defense network as Agent Oktober in the distant future. Her combat and espionage talents soon made her Russia's most accomplished operative; although still retaining no memories of her earlier training, she took the codename "Black Widow." In one assignment, Natasha helped American mercenary Danny French steal a unique energy globe from Project: Four, although French absconded with the globe, betraying their employer Damon Dran. Natasha was subsequently reunited with Logan, his memories of their past relationship suppressed by Weapon X. When he traveled to the U.S. following his recruitment by Canada's Department H, Natasha protected him from Hydra assassins, only to clash with him when he helped U.S. operatives Carol Danvers and Ben Grimm steal Russia's top-secret Red Storm Project. She also trained fellow Russian operatives, including Boris Bullski, who became her partner in various assignments.

After Russian scientist Anton Vanko left Russia to work with Iron Man (Tony Stark), Natasha's superiors sent her and fellow operative Boris Turgenov to assassinate both men. When Turgenov stole Vanko's Crimson Dynamo armor, both Turgenov and Vanko died in battle, but Natasha escaped.

REAL NAME: Natalia "Natasha" Alianovna Romanova
ALIASES: Natasha Romanoff (anglicized version of her Russian name), Nadine Roman, Nat, Babette, Ebon Flame, Tsarina, Oktober, Laura Matthers, Nancy Rushman, Black Pearl, Natalia Shostakova, Natuska, Czarina; others used in espionage assignments
IDENTITY: Publicly known
OCCUPATION: Adventurer, intelligence operative; former schoolteacher, fashion designer, ballerina (possibly)
CITIZENSHIP: Formerly USSR/Russia; resident in USA under extended visa authorized by SHIELD
PLACE OF BIRTH: Stalingrad (later Volgograd), former USSR
KNOWN RELATIVES: Unidentified parents (reportedly deceased), Alexi Shostakov (Red Guardian, estranged husband), Vindiktor (alleged brother, deceased)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Avengers, SHIELD, the Initiative; formerly "Marvel Knights" (Daredevil's vigilante team), Queen's Vengeance, Champions of Los Angeles, Lady Liberators, KGB
EDUCATION: Unrevealed (formerly believed to be college graduate)
FIRST APPEARANCE: Tales of Suspense #52 (1964)

She soon seduced and manipulated the costumed archer Hawkeye (Clint Barton) into assisting her, and helped him enhance his arsenal with more technologically sophisticated arrows. Hawkeye's influence led her to rebel against her masters, who extorted her to return to action with



Art by Frank Cho with Don Heck (inset)

Art by John Buscema

a new costume and weapons, but she and Hawkeye again failed against Iron Man. Briefly hospitalized, she returned to Russia and broke all ties with her former superiors. Hawkeye joined the Avengers in her absence, and when she returned to the U.S., she divided her time between freelance work for elite intelligence agency SHIELD and informal assistance on Avengers missions. When she and Hawkeye were captured by General Yuri Brushov, she learned Alexi Shostakov still lived as Red Guardian, who protested his employers' dishonorable treatment of the Avengers and seemingly sacrificed his life to save them. Unaware Shostakov had again survived, Natasha briefly retired from action and contemplated a marriage proposal from Hawkeye, but, following a reunion with Ivan Petrovitch, broke ties with Hawkeye to begin a solo vigilante career against Astrologer, Watchlord and others.

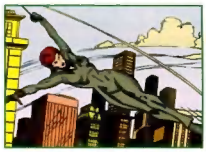
When time-traveling android Mister Kline framed Natasha for murder via an android Scorpion duplicate, Matt Murdock (secretly Daredevil) defended her and became romantically drawn to her, per Kline's future-altering plans. Kline seemingly perished before further manipulating them, but they remained together as a crime-fighting couple; accompanied by Ivan, they left New York for California, where they soon clashed with Damon Dran, who might have killed them had Danny French not sacrificed his life to stop Dran. Natasha and Daredevil briefly returned to New York to assist the Avengers, who finally awarded her full membership, but the pair soon returned to California and fought several superhumans whom Moondragon had mutated with the intention of fighting Thanos.

After fighting alongside Daredevil against the terrorists of Black Spectre and Hydra, Natasha encountered another terrorist group, the Sword of Judgement [sic], and discovered their leader Agamemnon to be her long-lost friend Andre Rostov. Growing alienated from Daredevil, she ultimately ended their relationship but continued her activities in California, where she and several other super heroes founded the Champions after helping Olympians Hercules and Venus foil a scheme masterminded by their enemy Pluto. During the Champions' brief history, Black Widow served as team leader and became increasingly close to Hercules. Meanwhile, Natasha and Ivan and the now-defected Alexi Bruskin were attacked by several Russian super-agents, including a new Crimson Dynamo (Ivan's son Yuri) and the Titanium Man (Boris Bullski). When the Champions disbanded, Natasha and Hercules remained together for a time, aiding the Avengers against Korvac, but they soon parted company. She returned to SHIELD assignments, including one where she joined Spider-Man and others in freeing the entire SHIELD Helicarrier from the terrorist Viper. Months later, Natasha rescued Ivan from the vengeful Damon Dran, fighting several costumed mercenaries, including former Russian agent Iron Maiden, in the process.

Following a stint as spokeswoman for Barbara Whalen's short-lived "Super-Heroes Against Drugs" campaign, Natasha was drawn back to Avengers duty during such major crises as an Atlantean invasion and the "Acts of Vengeance" conspiracy. After Russian dissidents briefly manipulated her into crime via an LMD of Alexi Shostakov, Natasha returned to the Avengers full-time; when her long-dormant Oktober persona was activated, Iron Man helped her break her brainwashing. Eventually becoming team leader, Natasha led the Avengers against the Mindspawn, the Gatherers and others, and developed an unrequited crush on Captain America. During a business trip to Russia, she and Iron Man shared a brief romance and battled her former student, Titanium Man, who seemingly died in battle but later returned. When AIM reconstructed the Cosmic Cube, Ivan was seriously wounded by the Red Skull while investigating on Natasha's behalf. The Avengers defeated the Skull, but Ivan may have died from his wounds, having not yet resurfaced since then.

When most of the active Avengers seemingly perished fighting Onslaught, Natasha was forced to disband the team but kept busy against old enemies and new, including terrorist units called Underground Militia and Freedomslight. She was lured into a trap by the armored Vindiktor, who claimed to be her long-lost brother, but he seemingly perished before his claims could be proven. When Natasha's teammates resurfaced alive, the Avengers were re-established, but Natasha did not return to full-time duty. She joined Nick Fury in a counter-terrorist operation in Latveria, which forced her to manipulate Daredevil and others on Fury's behalf. On another mission, she encountered the latest graduate of Russia's Red Room, Yelena Belova, who was desperate to prove herself Natasha's better as the new Black Widow. Natasha participated in Daredevil's short-lived efforts to form a new super-team; months later, while being helped by Daredevil in turn, she discovered that new international charges against her came from her husband Alexi, who had developed an obsessive vendetta against her and political power with which to pursue it.

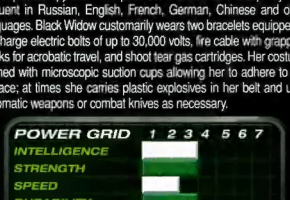
Shortly after the mad Scarlet Witch's attack again disbanded the Avengers, Natasha retired to Arizona but was targeted, as were other survivors of the Black Widow Program, by the North Institute on behalf of the corporation Gynacon. Natasha's investigations led her back to Russia, where she was appalled to learn the extent of her past manipulation; she also discovered she and her fellow Widows were hunted because Gynacon, having purchased Russian bio-technology from Red Room's successor agency 2R, wanted all prior users of the technology dead. After killing Gynacon CEO Ian McMasters, she clashed with operatives of multiple governments to rescue Sally Anne Carter, a girl Natasha had befriended in her investigations. More recently, Natasha has joined a new Avengers roster organized by Iron Man, who is now also the director of SHIELD as Tony Stark.



Art by Ron Frenz

HEIGHT: 5'7" **EYES:** Blue
WEIGHT: 131 lbs. **HAIR:** Red-auburn (formerly dyed black)

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Black Widow is an extraordinary gymnast, athlete, and hand-to-hand combatant, trained in multiple martial arts; government treatments have slowed her aging, augmented her immune system and enhanced her physical durability. Her strength is also enhanced, sufficient to lift 500 lbs. She is an accomplished spy and an expert with most forms of weaponry. She is fluent in Russian, English, French, German, Chinese and other languages. Black Widow customarily wears two bracelets equipped to discharge electric bolts of up to 30,000 volts, fire cable with grappling hooks for acrobatic travel, and shoot tear gas cartridges. Her costume is lined with microscopic suction cups allowing her to adhere to any surface; at times she carries plastic explosives in her belt and uses automatic weapons or combat knives as necessary.



THE COLLECTIVE

HISTORY: After joining the X-Men, mutant Kuan-Yin Xorn proved to be a near-duplicate of mutant terrorist Magneto, possibly having been transformed by the powers of Magneto's daughter, the Scarlet Witch (Wanda Maximoff). As "Magneto," Xorn rampaged through New York City until his former teammate Wolverine beheaded him, releasing Xorn's energy-self into the atmosphere, where it remained for months. During that time, the Scarlet Witch went insane and stripped almost all the world's mutants of their abilities. Many of these stolen energies converged into a collective stranded within Earth's orbit. The collective merged with Xorn's essence and he led it back to Earth, where it was drawn to Michael Pointer, a post office worker in North Pole, Alaska who possessed the mutant ability to absorb such energies. Upon impact, the collective wiped out the entire town and bonded with Pointer, who tried in vain to resist Xorn's powerful mental influence.

Detected and opposed by authorities as it walked across Canada, the Collective struck down a SHIELD convoy and apparently slaughtered Canada's resident super-team Alpha Flight, though at least Sasquatch (Walter Langkowski) survived.

As the Collective approached the United States, SHIELD director Maria Hill called in the Avengers to help. Avengers leader Captain America (Steve Rogers) in turn sought the assistance of Sentry (Robert Reynolds) and Daisy Johnson (a powerful mutant SHIELD agent), while Iron Man (Tony Stark) tried to stop the entity peaceably. Stark had almost succeeded when Ms. Marvel (Carol Danvers) intervened and attacked the Collective. It then terrorized the city of Cleveland until the Sentry knocked the entity into outer space, where he fought it alongside Iron Man. While the Avengers and SHIELD identified the entity after the Vision matched its various energy signatures to depowered mutants in the Avengers database, the Collective sought to return to Earth. Since the adaptive Collective was mastering more of its powers with each encounter, SHIELD convinced Iron Man to let it return to Earth unopposed, believing it might be trying to locate the Scarlet Witch. Instead, it landed on the island of Genosha and located the now-reclusive Magneto. As the Avengers watched, the Collective tried to transfer its magnetic powers from Pointer to Magneto, who resisted Xorn's pleas to assume a leadership role. The Avengers tried to intervene, but the Collective raised an army of unliving mutant bodies from the rubble of a long-past Sentinel attack, pitting them against the heroes. As the Collective vacated Pointer, leaving him naked and confused, Captain America ordered Daisy Johnson to take down Magneto. While Johnson caused a tremor within Magneto's brain, Ms. Marvel tried to absorb the Collective, reducing it to a bodiless mass of energy. Iron Man quickly trapped it within an energy field and had Sentry fly it into the sun.

Retaining some portion of his Collective-derived powers, Pointer was taken in by SHIELD for training. After the recent "civil war" among America's super-heroes due to the Superhuman Registration Act, Pointer was placed on the Canadian team Omega Flight, which was set up to curtail the rash of super-powered criminals who had fled to Canada.

FIRST APPEARANCE: (Energies) House of M #8 (2005); (Collective) New Avengers #16 (2006); (identified) New Avengers #19 (2006)

NOTE: *The Collective's energy signature was positively identified as including the lost powers of Abyss, Aero, Agent Zero, Aguila, Angel Dust, Beak, Black Tom Cassidy, Blind Faith, Blob, Boost, Bora, Brass, Caiman, Callisto, Chamber, Conquistador, Arturo Falcone, Fatale, Flambe, Forearm, Freakshow, Gloom, Hack, Harpoon, Hazard, Hub, Hybrid (Jimmy Marks), Shola Inkosi, Jubilee, Key, King Bedlam, Kiwi Black, Lara the Illusionist, Hanna Levy, Lightning Rod, Longneck, Artie Maddicks, Magneto, Mary Zero, Mesmero, Mist Mistress, Monsoon, Danielle Moonstar, Murmur (Arlette Truffaut), Murmur (of Emplate's Hellions), Nightwind, Armena Ortega, Overrider, Paul Patterson, Phantazia, Polaris, Postman, Preview, Prodigy (David Alleyne), Quicksilver, Quill, Radian, Radius, Reaper, Redneck, Rictor, Scanner, Shatter, Shocker, Skywalker, Slick, Slipstream, Specter, Jon Spectre, Spike, Spoilsport, Stacy X, Strobe, Sunfire, Tag, Tantra, Tarot, Tattoo, Tether, Tremolo, Unus, Vague, Wicked, Wild Child, Wildside, Wind Dancer, Windshear, Wiz Kid, Wraith (Hector Mendoza), Shen Xorn, Kuan-Yin Xorn and Zach.*

HEIGHT: Inapplicable
WEIGHT: Inapplicable
EYES: Inapplicable
HAIR: Inapplicable

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Theoretically, the Collective possessed every power present within the mass of displaced mutant energies that formed it, though most of these abilities have not yet been utilized. It could fly, levitate, project various types of energy beams, grow to gigantic sizes, generate force fields and survive in outer space. Its eyesight in human form had a range of at least 22 miles, and it walked at a pace of 200 mph. As it only learned how to use its powers while engaged in conflict, the full extent and variety of its powers remains unknown. Many of the mutants who empowered it were energy projectors, ranging from telekinetic to psionic to thermal. It could reabsorb the powers taken from it, as it did from Ms. Marvel. How or if it could access the power of more physical mutations remains unrevealed. Whether or not it collected all depowered mutants' energies or just a number of them also remains unrevealed.

POWER GRID 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- INTELLIGENCE
- STRENGTH
- SPEED
- DURABILITY
- ENERGY PROJECTION
- FIGHTING SKILLS

Art by Mike Deodato

HISTORY: Anthony "Tony" Stark is the son of Howard and Maria Stark, whose company Stark Industries was one of the most prominent U.S. corporations. At the age of seven, Tony was sent to boarding school by his father in the hopes of "toughening" him. Tony found people difficult to relate to, and became fascinated with machines, which could be controlled or repaired. After reading Thomas Malory's Le Morte d'Arthur, Tony was entranced by its tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. He was also fascinated by the science fiction tales of Isaac Asimov and Robert A. Heinlein, but as he matured he grew to admire scientists and explorers such as Marco Polo, Wilbur & Orville Wright, and Vasco Da Gama. As a teenager, Tony dated Meredith McCall, whose father ran a company that rivaled Stark Industries. Tony and Meredith's fathers forced the two to end their relationship.

Enrolled in M.I.T. at fifteen, Tony was mentored by professors Theodore Slaight and Sal Kennedy. He proved to be a prodigy, and ultimately graduated M.I.T. with a double masters in physics and engineering at the age of nineteen. Tony went to work for his father's company, but despite his incredible talents as an inventor, he had little interest in engineering and even less in business. He spent a great deal of his time romancing women and drinking with his cousin Morgan and best friend Tiberius Stone. Tony became involved with Sunset Bain, a woman five years his senior, and inadvertently gave her access to Stark Industries' security secrets. Bain funded a raid on Stark Industries' facilities and used stolen data to set up her own rival company, Baintronics, but the Starks could not prove her involvement in the theft.

When Tony was twenty-one, his parents died in a car accident and he inherited Stark Industries. His first act was to purchase the manufacturer of his parents' car and correct the brake problem which had seemingly caused their deaths. Unknown to Tony, the true architect of his parents' deaths was rival company Republic Oil (later Roxxon Oil), who hoped that the uninterested Tony could be made to sell Stark Industries. Still lacking in business acumen, Tony promoted secretary Virginia "Pepper" Potts to be his executive assistant, and left the majority of his workload on her so that he could avoid what he saw as a burden.

Tony finally began to show some signs of settling down when he became engaged to Joanna Nivena. He also developed many military contracts for his company, including a proposed battlesuit to protect soldiers and enhance their abilities in the field. Still seeking excuses to get out of his office, Stark personally attended a field test of his military hardware at one of his international plants; however, soon after his arrival Stark's party was attacked by a band of terrorists led by the Sin-Cong revolutionary Wong-Chu (himself a lackey of Chinese would-be world conqueror the Mandarin). During the skirmish, a land mine went off and lodged a piece of shrapnel near Tony's heart. Taken back to Wong-Chu's camp, Stark shared a cell with Professor Ho Yinsen, a Chinese medical technician. Wong-Chu demanded that the two scientists develop advanced weaponry for his forces. Knowing that he could not live long with the shrapnel so close to his heart, Stark proposed that he and Yinsen devote their gifts to creating one of the battlesuits he had been developing, equipped with a magnetic field generator to prevent the shrapnel from reaching his heart. The armor they created became the first true Iron Man armor, and was equipped with crude magnetic weaponry for defense. While the armor's battery was being powered, some of Wong-Chu's men attempted to break in on the proceedings. Yinsen went to create a diversion, and was shot to death by Wong-Chu's men. When the battery had finished charging, Tony Stark went into battle as Iron Man and tore Wong-Chu's camp apart. He eventually returned to the USA with the aid of U.S. marine James Rhodes. As Stark, he offered Rhodes a job with his company should he ever need one.

At first, Stark found his new life a torment: his armor's chestplate had to be worn constantly and required frequent recharging, and he kept the armor a secret from everyone, including his fiancée. Turning suicidal, he removed the chestplate to end his life, but finally replaced it, determined that he would conquer his disability. He began to drink heavily to overcome his depression. He investigated marketing the Iron Man armor, but eventually abandoned these plans, fearing what might happen if his armor wound up in the hands of criminals. He finally shared his double identity with Joanna, and she encouraged him to use his armor to become a super hero and save lives. Tony came around to the idea, but Joanna ultimately called off their engagement because she wanted a family, and knew that Tony could never be the husband she desired.

REAL NAME: Anthony Edward "Tony" Stark
ALIASES: "Shellhead," "Golden Avenger," "Tetsujin;" formerly Crimson Dynamo, Iron Knight, Hogan Potts, "Spare Parts Man;" impersonated Cobalt Man (Ralph Roberts)
IDENTITY: Publicly known
OCCUPATION: Adventurer, director of SHIELD, CEO of Stark Industries; former U.S.A. Secretary of Defense, former technician for Askew Electronics, former CEO of Stark International, Circuits Maximus, Stark Enterprises, Stark Solutions
CITIZENSHIP: USA
PLACE OF BIRTH: Long Island, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: Howard Anthony Stark (father, deceased), Maria Collins Carbonell Stark (mother, deceased), Morgan Stark (cousin), Isaac Stark, Sr., Isaac Stark, Jr. (ancestors, deceased)
GROUP AFFILIATION: SHIELD, Avengers, the Initiative, Hellfire Club (outer circle); formerly Illuminati, Thunderbolts, Force Works
EDUCATION: Advanced degrees in physics and electrical engineering
FIRST APPEARANCE: Tales of Suspense #39 (1963)

Art by Patrick Zircher with Adi Granov (inset)

Iron Man began to establish himself as one of the U.S.'s most eminent super heroes, but while halting a breakout of circus lions and tigers, Tony saw how his armor's appearance frightened the people he was defending. Inspired by a suggestion from his date Marion, Tony repainted the armor in stainless gold. Under Pepper's tutorship, Tony gradually developed into a sharp businessman whose inventive genius, clever deals and impassioned marketing expanded Stark Industries' influence and fame. Stark's most trying foe in the world of business proved to be Senator Harrington Byrd, who had to be repeatedly convinced of Stark Industries' abilities to fulfill their contracts, and held lingering doubts over Iron Man's trustworthiness. Iron Man became an important mascot to the company, and Stark established him as his personal "bodyguard."

When the Hulk was framed for crimes by the Asgardian sorcerer Loki as part of a scheme to pit the Hulk against Loki's step-brother Thor, the Hulk's youthful friend Rick Jones sent a distress call to the Fantastic Four, only for Loki to divert the message to Thor. By chance, the message was also intercepted by Iron Man, and by Ant-Man (Henry Pym) and the Wasp (Janet Van Dyne). The four heroes eventually teamed with the Hulk to defeat Loki. Ant-Man suggested that the five remain together as a team, and the Wasp named them "the Avengers." Tony Stark was instrumental in setting up the group, bankrolling them first through his personal fortune and later through the charitable Maria Stark Foundation. He also provided his family's Manhattan manor to serve as a headquarters, renamed Avengers Mansion. His family's long-time butler Edwin Jarvis was the only staff member who remained to serve the Avengers, and he became an indispensable resource to the new team. Stark also negotiated with the NSA to establish national security clearance for the Avengers via special agent James Murch.

While testing his "Stark Special" racecar, Tony wound up in a wreck, but was saved from the crash by ex-boxer Harold "Happy" Hogan. To repay him, Stark hired Hogan as his personal chauffeur, and Happy became like a bodyguard to Stark, resenting Iron Man. Hogan also romantically pursued Pepper Potts, though she alternately seemed more interested in Stark or Iron Man. Tony was strongly attracted to Pepper, but he felt he could not pursue a normal relationship due to his armored condition, and he often tried to discourage Pepper's romantic attentions. Meanwhile, former Stark Industries scientist Gregor Shapanka (fired for theft) returned to menace Stark as the ice-generating Jack Frost, and would battle Iron Man repeatedly in later years as the Blizzard. Stark also fought armored Russian super-agent the Crimson Dynamo (Anton Vanko) and convinced him to defect. Vanko joined Stark Industries and later died defending the company from a new Crimson Dynamo (Boris Turgenov) and Russian spy the Black Widow (Natasha Romanoff).

In one of the Avengers' earliest adventures, the Space Phantom impersonated the Hulk, who then realized how little his teammates trusted him. The Hulk quit the Avengers, and Stark scrambled to prove to the government that the team was still viable. While battling the villain Mr. Doll, Iron Man found himself powerless against his foe's ability to cause pain using mystic talismans. Stark completely redesigned his armor into a new, more lightweight red and gold configuration, and defeated Mr. Doll in a rematch. Iron Man then rejoined the Avengers to search for the Hulk, and wound up in battle against him and Namor the Sub-Mariner. While pursuing Namor they came across the comatose body of Captain America, the famous World War II super hero. Revived, Captain America

MODEL 1 — NO FINISH, MODEL 1 —GOLD FINISH, MODEL 3 & MODEL 4

was welcomed into the present by the Avengers and invited to join their ranks. Captain America was instrumental in proving the team's viability, and he became as important to them as Stark himself.

Iron Man went on to confront the Mandarin face-to-face for the first time. At one point in his adventures, the Iron Man armor's battery ran low, and Stark suffered a heart attack. He was able to recharge, but remained inside the Iron Man armor for weeks until he was finally able to modify the chestplate's battery. At the same time he was funding the Avengers, Stark helped establish the international super-spy agency SHIELD to combat terrorist threats. Stark joined with Reed Richards (Mr. Fantastic of the Fantastic Four) and the mutant inventor Forge in building the first Helicarrier, an enormous airborne vessel which became SHIELD's mobile base of operations. Stark also provided SHIELD with their weapons, protective uniforms, vehicles and all manner of special paraphernalia. Stark's LMDs (Life Model Decoys), androids which could impersonate humans, were of particular use to SHIELD, and Stark himself occasionally used an LMD so that he and Iron Man could seemingly appear in the same place at once. Stark recommended Colonel Nick Fury to serve as SHIELD's director, and Fury was ultimately given the position.

Iron Man, Giant-Man (Henry Pym), the Wasp and Thor all eventually left the Avengers, but the team continued under the leadership of Captain America, with new recruits Quicksilver, the Scarlet Witch and Hawkeye (Clint Barton); an outlaw archer, Hawkeye had fought Iron Man under the influence of his lover, the Black Widow, but Iron Man recognized Hawkeye's sincere desire to reform and supported his Avengers membership. Continuing to supply the Avengers' financial and technological needs, Tony remained available as Iron Man when necessary, rejoining and exiting their ranks several times over the ensuing years, sometimes serving as chairman. When the armored Russian Titanium Man (Boris Bullski) challenged Iron Man to combat in Alberia, Stark met and defeated his foe, but Happy was injured aiding Iron Man. At the same time, Pepper realized that she loved Happy more than Tony, and Tony encouraged them to become a couple. Happy subsequently determined that Tony was Iron Man. When Tony collapsed from strain after another clash with the Titanium Man, the public began to speculate that he was Iron Man. To help keep Tony's secrets, Happy donned the armor, only to be mistakenly captured by the Mandarin. Forcing himself to recover from his latest heart attack, Tony rescued Happy. Soon after this, Pepper and Happy were married.

SHIELD dispatched their agent Jasper Sitwell to help monitor Stark Industries security and defend their interests in the company. Stark found this to be an unwanted nuisance, as Sitwell's presence complicated his double identity. Jasper and Tony both found themselves drawn to the beautiful Whitney Frost, but she proved to be the daughter of the Avengers' foe Count Nefaria and a high-ranking member of the Maggia crime syndicate. Seeking to steal Stark's inventions, she pitted agents such as Whiplash (Mark Scarlotti) and Gladiator (Melvin Potter) against him. When Tony's armor began to fail him and required an immediate redesign to save his life, Happy helped Tony construct new armor. Tony Stark also became involved with Janice Cord, whose father died in a hate-filled attempt at killing Iron Man.

After using one of his LMDs to deceive the Mandarin and protect his identity, Stark was horrified when the LMD developed an independent personality and usurped his identity. The LMD obtained a suit of Iron Man armor and began running Stark Industries while the real Stark was away, believing that it was superior to Tony. Unable to prove his identity, Tony fell into the clutches of Madame Masque (a newly-garbed Whitney Frost), an agent of the gold-loving Mordecai Midas, who attempted to force Stark to turn over his fortune. Tony used his original Iron Man armor to destroy the LMD imposter, but suffered another heart attack in the process. The Avengers rushed him to a hospital where Dr. Jose Santini transplanted a synthetic heart into his chest, so that Stark no longer required his chestplate to live.

Afraid to continue on as Iron Man for fear of his precarious health, Stark destroyed Midas' operations, then sought to retire.

Stark brought in boxer Edward "Eddie" March, a one-time sparring partner of Happy's, to serve as the [redacted] Iron Man. An Iron Man fan, March relished the assignment, but did not inform Stark that he was suffering from a blood clot in his brain which could result in his death during a fight. When March went into action for the first time, he found himself facing the latest Crimson Dynamo (Alex Nevsky). March nearly died in the fight, and Stark was forced to reclaim the Iron Man identity. As Iron Man fought the Crimson Dynamo, they were both attacked by the Titanium Man, and Janice was killed in the crossfire. Both romantically linked to Janice, Nevsky and Stark blamed each other.

As public sentiment against his arms manufacturing grew, Tony began to steer the company away from munitions. Befriending engineer Kevin O'Brien, Stark eventually revealed his double identity to him. He designed a second suit of armor for O'Brien, enabling him to become the Guardsman and assist him in case of an emergency; however, when O'Brien donned the armor, a malfunction in its cybernetic controls caused [redacted] personality disorder where O'Brien began to hate Iron Man, and sought to steal Stark's then-lover Marianne Rogers. O'Brien allied himself with Simon Gilbert, a Stark Industries stockholder who opposed Tony's move away from munitions. When Iron Man and the Guardsman fought, Iron Man accidentally killed Kevin. Simon Gilbert continued to plague Stark, along with his son Gary, the villainous activist Firebrand; however, Gary's sister Roxanne was in love with Stark and tried to end her family's hostilities towards him. Following the Avengers' involvement in the interstellar Kree-Skrull War, Iron Man joined Mr. Fantastic, Black Bolt of the Inhumans, Professor Xavier of the X-Men, sorcerer Dr. Strange, and Namor in founding the Illuminati, a secret organization designed to share knowledge and pool resources against major threats.

As his company continued to expand worldwide, Tony renamed the corporation Stark International to reflect this. After witnessing firsthand the impact his company's weapons had on innocent lives, Tony resolved to abandon munitions altogether, and Stark International turned most of its efforts to electronics and computer engineering from then on. Michael O'Brien eventually turned up to blame Iron Man for his brother Kevin's death and sought to prosecute him, but he ultimately recognized Iron Man's heroism and forgave him. Adopting a new suit of Guardsman armor, O'Brien aided Iron Man against the Mandarin and later teamed with novice super hero Jack of Hearts and others to assist Iron Man against Midas. Iron Man mentored Jack of Hearts for some time thereafter, but Jack soon went solo again.

Stark and Madame Masque became romantically involved, but she ultimately turned against Tony in a desperate attempt to save her father's life. Nefaria seemingly died during Iron Man and Madame Masque's subsequent conflict, and the two lovers were driven apart. Meanwhile, SHIELD had become frustrated by Stark International's move out of munitions, which had forced them to turn to inferior manufacturers for their weaponry. Nick Fury authorized three of his agents to attempt a hostile takeover of Stark's company, but the agents went rogue and tried to assassinate Stark instead. Although Stark survived, he was frustrated by Fury's betrayal of their trust.

By this time, Stark International's notable key staff included James Rhodes, who had finally accepted a position as Stark's pilot; Tony's supremely capable secretary Bambina "Bambi" Arbogast; public relations man Artemus "Artie" Pithins; security chief Victor "Vic" Martinelli, stationed with Stark by the witness relocation program; vice-president Yvette Avril; neurosurgeon Erica Sondheim; and electronics technician Scott Lang (secretly the new Ant-Man). Tony also began dating bodyguard Bethany Cabe.

Rival industrialist Justin Hammer designed a device which could enable limited control over the Iron Man armor, and he began testing his control, creating seemingly random malfunctions. Hammer finally took full advantage of his power when Iron Man attended [redacted] function with Sergei Kotznin, ambassador to Carnelia, whose country [redacted] about to sign [redacted] deal with Stark International. Hammer caused the armor to fire a repulsor ray through Kotznin's chest, killing him. With Iron Man wanted and the armor co-opted, Tony had Captain America train him in unarmed combat so that he could attempt to clear his name without using the armor. Discovering that Hammer ran a private artificial island full of super-villains in his employ, Stark defeated them as Iron Man, then captured one of Hammer's top scientists to testify on his behalf; however, Hammer himself remained untouchable by the law.

The combined stress of Hammer's machinations and SHIELD's constant pressure drove Tony further into drinking. Bethany Cabe kept Tony from succumbing completely, and he began to realize and deal with his alcoholism. Bouncing back, Tony faced challenges from Edwin Cord's Cordco company, and, by exposing Cord's criminal activities, brought him to ruin. Tony then purchased Cordco for Stark International. Stark began to develop specialized suits of armor, including his first outer space armor and low visibility (stealth) armor. He first used the stealth armor while rescuing Bethany's long-lost husband Alex von Tilburg, but this drove Tony and Bethany apart as she returned to von Tilburg. When Yellowjacket (Henry Pym's then-current identity) became unstable and abused his wife, the Wasp, Tony had the unpleasant task of joining the other Avengers in court-martialing him, forcing Pym's departure from the team. Tony soon became romantically involved with the Wasp, but Captain America — having recently learned Stark was Iron Man — convinced him this relationship was unethical. Tony revealed his dual identity to the Wasp, and she ended their romance.

In opposing Obadiah Stane's attempts at forming a major multinational conglomerate, Tony unwittingly made a driven enemy. Stane set up games of psychological warfare against Tony which included physical attacks by his Chessmen super-operatives, outbidding Stark International for key contracts, and having his lackey Indries Moomji romance Stark, all [redacted] an attempt to force Stark to resort to drinking. As Stane's pressure increased, Tony responded as anticipated, and after Indries rejected Tony, he virtually gave up trying to oppose Stane. When the villain Magma attacked Stark International, Tony proved too drunk to wage a competent battle, and instead revealed his double identity to Rhodes. With Tony passed out, Rhodes donned the armor and defeated Magma, and Tony told him to keep the armor. He then turned his back on Stark International and proceeded to drink himself out of his company, property and fortune until all of his assets were frozen. Obadiah Stane stepped in and claimed Stark International, renaming it Stane International, but Rhodes prevented Stane from obtaining the Iron Man armors.

While Rhodes continued to serve as Iron Man without him, Tony wound up in the gutter, drinking to forget his problems. He befriended a pregnant woman named Gretl Anders, a regular drinking partner. One snowy night, Gretl was ready to give birth, but they had no money for a warm room; Tony delivered her son and kept him alive, but Gretl died. After these experiences, Tony finally overcame his alcoholism. He sought to repair his friendship with Rhodes and befriended Rhodes' twin allies Morley and Clytemnestra Erwin, who had been responsible for the armor's upkeep for months; however, Rhodes had become distrustful of Tony and refused maintenance on the armor. Tony realized that the helmet's cybernetic link had not been properly tuned to Rhodes' brainwaves, and he fashioned a new model of his original armor in order to confront Rhodes and prove he was not his enemy. Convinced, Rhodes finally allowed Stark to take care of the armor.

Tony became involved with Clytemnestra as the four began to set up their own California-based company Circuits Maximus, but Stane was not yet done with Stark. He planted a bomb in their laboratory, killing Morley and badly injuring Rhodes. Realizing that Stane had to be stopped, Tony constructed his most advanced armor yet at the new western Avengers Compound and confronted Stane, who had designed his own armored identity as the Iron Monger. When Tony defeated the Iron Monger, Stane committed suicide.

Rejoining the Avengers as part of their new western roster (led by Hawkeye), Tony set about reacquiring his fortune and ultimately developed his new company into Stark Enterprises, concentrating on space exploration; however, Morley's death turned Clytemnestra against him. She betrayed Tony to AIM and died trying to battle Iron Man. Rhodes remained faithful to Stark and occasionally wore the Iron Man armor, but after an incident where he was nearly burned to death, he tried to give the armor up for good.

While Tony was acquiring the company Accutech, it was sabotaged by the Ghost, an anti-industry mercenary. Tony's long-time foe the Spymaster also targeted Accutech, and infiltrated Stark Enterprises' resources before the Ghost killed him. Tony again intervened in Justin Hammer's schemes when he provided sanctuary for Force (Clayton Wilson), an agent of Hammer's who wanted to reform. Stark arranged to fake Force's death and gave him a new identity as Carl Walker, a research scientist. During Force's defection, Iron Man also encountered another Hammer super-agent, the new Blizzard (Donnie Gill), and Stark sought to offer young Gill reformatory guidance as well. Impounding Force's armor, Stark immediately analyzed it. To his shock, he found familiar circuitry patterns based on his own Iron Man armor designs. Employing computer engineer Abraham Zimmer (formerly of Accutech) and Scott Lang, Tony raided Hammer's computer records and discovered that Spymaster had stolen his designs and sold them to Hammer. Hammer had then used Stark's designs to armor several of his super-villain clients, including the Beetle (Abner Jenkins), the Controller, the Mauler (Brendan Doyle), the Raiders and Stilt-Man (Wilbur Day). Enraged at the thought that innocent people might have been killed with his technology, Tony resolved to eliminate all traces of his technology that had fallen into outside hands.

Having already wiped Hammer's computer records with a virus courtesy of Zimmer, Tony assigned his legal team to bring the criminals in while Iron Man confronted the criminals directly, using a negator pack to fry their armors' circuitry; however, there was little Stark's lawyers could do to help him. Learning that Zimmer and Lang had been unable to retrieve one name from Hammer's database, Tony suspected that it might be Stingray, a federal employee. When Stingray refused to have his armor confiscated, Iron Man beat him in combat, only to find that Stingray's armor did not feature any of his designs. Iron Man was now wanted for assaulting Stingray, and Tony publicly denounced and "fired" his other identity, believing that the best solution would be to take the fight outside the law.

When SHIELD became involved, Stark pretended to cooperate with them in Iron Man's capture, but actually used the opportunity to confiscate the Mandroid battle armor he had built for their agents. Deciding he could not trust anyone with his technology, Tony next targeted the Guardsman armor he had provided to the Vault, the nation's foremost superhuman prison. At the same time, the government had stripped Steve Rogers of his Captain America identity and he adopted a new alias as "the Captain." At Rogers' request, Tony supplied him with a new shield, hoping it would serve as a bribe to prevent Steve's interference in his armor crusade; however, the Captain tried to halt Tony's raid on the Vault, and defended the last remaining Guardsman. Iron Man finally brought the Captain down from behind and fried the last Guardsman suit. The Captain returned Stark's shield, and from then on his friendship with Tony was severely strained.

Next attacking the Crimson Dynamo (Dmitri Bukharin) and the Titanium Man (the Gremlin) in Russia, Tony fried the Dynamo's armor and accidentally killed the Titanium Man. Denounced as an international outlaw, Iron Man was expelled from the Avengers. Increasingly concerned by Iron Man's rogue actions, the U.S. military turned to Edwin Cord, who provided them with the one Hammer-derived armor that Stark had been unable to locate earlier: Firepower. Cord's agent Firepower lured Iron Man into combat and launched a devastating attack on him. Seeing no way out, Tony faked Iron Man's death by remotely launching his armor, which Firepower destroyed. Stark was content to leave his days as Iron Man behind, but Cord continued his vendetta against Stark by sending Firepower to destroy his businesses. Finally, Tony built a new suit of Iron Man armor and defeated Firepower. Tony decided to remain active as Iron Man, but publicly claimed his company had hired a "new" Iron Man. This "new" Iron Man soon rejoined the Avengers, most of whom saw through Stark's deception immediately, and Iron Man later admitted to the Avengers that he was still Tony Stark.

As Tony's business continued to thrive, he became involved with women such as Brie Daniels, Rae La Coste, and Kathleen Dare. Preoccupied by his hectic lifestyle, Tony did not realize Kathleen was stalking him until it was too late; she shot him, damaging his spine and leaving him unable to walk. Initially using a wheelchair, Tony was irritated at how people seemed to look down on him. He modified the Iron Man armor so that he could be fully mobile while armored, and began to spend more time within the armor. When Tony learned of a biochip which might restore full movement, he risked his life to have it installed, and he gradually regained mobility.

The biochip gained the attention of corporate foe Kearson DeWitt, who held grievances against Stark of which Tony was unaware. Bankrolled by Desmond Marrs of the Marrs Corporation, DeWitt hijacked the biochip and took control of Stark's nervous system, placing his entire body under tremendous strain. Stark resisted the outside control using an encephalo-link in his armor, but by the time he had defeated DeWitt, his body was so damaged he could barely move. Tony donned a skintight neuronet suit to help him function, but his armor became the only certain way to keep himself alive. He sought the aid of China's Dr. Su Yin, but the Chinese government would only allow her to assist Stark if he dispatched Iron Man against the Mandarin, who had formed an alliance with the Makluan dragon Fin Fang Foom and his people. Rhodes donned the armor to confront the Mandarin, hoping to spare Tony from the fight, but Rhodes was defeated. Tony resorted to employing a telepresence unit which would allow him to control his armor from a distance, but finally had to don the armor himself to defeat the Mandarin and the dragons.

While on a mission with the Avengers to halt the Kree-Shi'ar War which had threatened Earth's solar system, Iron Man was appalled to discover that the Kree's Supreme Intelligence had masterminded a massacre of his own people. Disobeying Captain America, Iron Man led a team of rogue Avengers in seemingly executing the Supreme Intelligence. Afterward, he expressed his regret to Captain America, and the two began trying to repair their fractured relationship. As Tony's health continued to deteriorate, he designed his variable threat assessment armor (also called the "War Machine") and won back Stane International's assets from its last owner, Justin Hammer. Succumbing to total nervous system failure, Tony seemingly died on an operating table. In his will, he made Rhodes the new CEO of Stark Enterprises, and left the War Machine armor for him to carry on as Iron Man. Rhodes respected his wishes.

Tony, however, had employed Erica Sondheim and Abe Zimmer to place him in cryogenic storage while they remapped his body's entire nervous system, essentially rebuilding his body. After a cyberspace interface was installed, Tony himself helped complete their work while in stasis. Once he was revived, Tony found that he would have to relearn how to perform even the simplest body functions, but that his senses were sharper than ever. He revealed his survival to Rhodes, who was infuriated at being deceived and immediately quit Stark Enterprises. The Avengers were estranged by Stark's deception as well, and Rhodes again took Tony's place in the team. Tony allowed Jim to keep the War Machine armor, and Rhodes continued to adventure under the alias of War Machine. Tony launched a new set of armor, the Neuromimetic Telepresence Unit 150 (NTU-150), which he could control from his bed. Employing Veronica Benning to assist in his physical therapy, Tony became romantically involved with her as well. He also began designing artificial intelligences to aid him in his work, including HOMER (Heuristically Operative Matrix Emulation Rostrum) and PLATO (Piezo-electrical Logistic Analytic Tactical Operator).

When the NTU-150 was destroyed in battle with Ultimo, the feedback nearly killed Tony. War Machine recruited Bethany Cabe, Michael O'Brien, Eddie March, Happy Hogan and Clayton Wilson to don spare suits of Iron Man armor and battle Ultimo as the "Iron Legion," but ultimately it was Stark, outfitted in his new modular armor, who defeated Ultimo. When the Avengers debated shutting down their struggling west coast branch, Iron Man returned just long enough to cast the deciding vote in favor of disbanding the western team, then resigned. He quickly recruited several former western Avengers into a team of his own making, Force Works, and gave them full access to his cutting edge technology. Although he set up the Scarlet Witch ■ team leader, Tony often assumed leadership, causing internal tensions. When Captain America's health began to fail him due to deterioration of his super-soldier serum, Tony outfitted him with ■ suit of armor to help prolong his life and enable him to continue fighting crime, having been through a similar ordeal himself.

By this time, Tony had secretly, gradually fallen under the control of Immortus, ruler of Limbo, then posing as his alternate self Kang (most notably, this influence had apparently contributed to Stark's participation in the Supreme Intelligence's execution). Scheming to keep the Avengers occupied on behalf of his cosmic masters the Time-Keepers, Immortus supplied Iron Man with mysterious allies, actually disguised Space Phantoms. As Tony lost control, he murdered one-time Avenger Yellowjacket (Rita DeMara), Avengers Mansion nanny Marilla and Force Works publicist Amanda Chaney. When the Avengers realized that Tony was now their enemy, they journeyed to ■ alternate timeline to recruit a younger Tony Stark who was certain to be free of Immortus' influence, since Immortus had apparently been subverting Stark's mind for years. This younger Stark helped them anticipate the elder Tony's actions, and they stormed an arctic bunker where Tony had been working on Immortus' super-weapon, ■ temporal transposer that would shunt the Earth outside of time. Tony nearly killed his younger self in battle, but he ultimately regretted his actions, designed a chestplate to save the younger Tony's life, and gave his own life to destroy the transposer.

The young Tony Stark started life anew while Stark Enterprises fell into the hands of Fujikawa Industries, merging into Stark-Fujikawa. Rhodes once again prevented Tony's armor secrets from being acquired. The young Tony Stark, wearing his own Iron Man armor, seemingly perished alongside the Fantastic Four and Avengers in battle with psionic monster Onslaught; however, they were all recreated on a new Counter-Earth fashioned by the mutant powers of Franklin Richards, a world where Tony Stark was reborn as an adult rather than ■ teenager. On this world, Stark's heart was damaged in ■ attack by the Hulk, and he required the Iron Man armor to prolong his life. He and the other people brought to Counter-Earth eventually learned it was not their world and were sent back home. Upon returning, the still-adult Tony found he had the collective memories and experiences of the original Tony Stark, merged with those of the teenage alternate Tony and the person he had been on Counter-Earth.

Once again in the peak of health, Tony designed a new suit of Iron Man armor and helped reestablish the Avengers. Rather than attempt to regain his old company, Tony set up Stark Solutions, ■ consulting firm. He soon met Rumiko Fujikawa, granddaughter of Fujikawa's founder, and they became involved. Tony's life was again imperiled when he learned that constant exposure to his armor's technology was threatening his health, but he redesigned the armor to correct this problem. When Iron Man defeated the villain Mentallo, Tony took advantage of the situation and used Mentallo's global mind control device to erase all knowledge of his often-compromised secret identity from every person on Earth. He then revealed it to those people he deemed trustworthy, causing them to

remember the memories he had buried. Some were uneasy regarding this unilateral mental tampering, and Captain America in particular disapproved. Tony also aided fellow Avenger Warbird (Carol Danvers), who had developed an alcohol problem. He brought her into Alcoholics Anonymous and helped rehabilitate her.

During a conflict with Sunset Bain, Tony discovered that the consciousness of the robot Jocasta, a one-time Avenger, was Bain's captive. Tony liberated Jocasta, who became his personal computer assistant; however, Jocasta unwittingly suffered from the Ultron Imperative, a deeply embedded program within all the creations of the robot menace Ultron, forcing them to seek the means to revive Ultron when he is defeated. Jocasta was forced to prepare the Iron Man armor to become Ultron's new home, but the process sped up when Iron Man was hit by a lightning bolt, causing Tony to suffer a heart attack at the same time. Thinking that the armor had been granted its own consciousness, Tony attempted to teach the armor, and the benign Ultron-12 aspect of its personality was receptive, but the cruelty of most past Ultron models corrupted the armor, and it murdered Whiplash during a fight; however, the armor ultimately sacrificed its "life" to save Tony, whose heart was failing. After implanting a robotic "heart" in Tony's chest that saved him, the armor deactivated.

Concerned that he might develop another suit of uncontrollable armor, Tony began wearing older models of armor rather than constructing a new design. He soon encountered the Sons of Yinsen, monks mentored by Ho Yinsen, who had preserved their leader's brain after his death. The Sons wore armor similar to that which Tony and Yinsen had constructed years earlier. Learning Wong-Chu was still alive, Stark helped the Sons of Yinsen battle him, and one of the monks finally slew Wong-Chu. Later, Tiberius Stone reentered Tony's life when he began to market powerful virtual reality technology called "Dreamvision." Stone became involved with Rumiko, halting her relationship with Tony, and Stark discovered that Stone had grandiose plans to conquer the Earth with Dreamvision; he began these plans by focusing his resources on publicly smearing Tony. Stark finally defeated Stone within Dreamvision, but Stone planted a subliminal message in Tony's brain that caused him to give up his fortune and close Stark Solutions. Adopting the identity of Hogan Potts, Tony became a mere computer technician for Askew Electronics, gradually constructing a new armor from Askew's SKIN (Synthetic Kinetic Interfacing Nanofluid), a digital fluid that can form a sheath around objects making them almost as resilient as Adamantium. Iron Man fought the Ghost and AIM when they attempted to bomb Askew, and he finally resumed his Tony Stark identity, reclaimed his fortune and returned to business as Stark Enterprises.

The Sons of Yinsen found the remains of the armor which Ultron had inhabited, and attempted to transform it into a new home for Yinsen's brain; however, the Ultron program revived and assumed mastery of the Sons of Yinsen. The only monk who resisted, Sun Tao, joined forces with Tony to defeat Ultron, but the other Sons of Yinsen seemingly perished. At this time, Jocasta's program exited Tony's systems and took up residence in the body of Antigone, the deactivated android offspring of Ultron's rogue bride Alkhema. Tony finally revealed his double identity to the public at large when he donned his armor in public to save a dog from being struck by a car. Rumiko, finally separated from Stone, reconciled with Tony and arranged for him to regain control of his original company under its original name – Stark Industries. From then on, Tony and Rumiko were a close couple. Tony also came into repeated conflict with Temugin, son of the seemingly deceased Mandarin, who fought Tony primarily out of obligation to his father's memory.

The U.S. President's chief of staff, Stu Conrad, offered Tony a position within the defense department as a contractor. Although Tony was uninterested, he investigated the department's recent problems and discovered that head of acquisitions Sonny Burch had been using Iron Man technology in defense equipment, exploiting a loophole in Stark's patents. Stark was unable to prevent Burch's use of his designs, and Burch's poor understanding of Stark's technology was resulting in mishaps in the field from malfunctions. Resolving to solve the problem, Tony offered himself as the new Secretary of Defense, promising to design Iron Man armor for U.S. soldiers and train them to operate it. Tony was ultimately voted in, and Burch committed suicide in disgrace.

Discovering that Burch had also blackmailed Force into assisting the defense department, Tony tried to make amends to him, granting him a position in preparing soldiers to operate Iron Man armor; however, Tony's tenure as Secretary of Defense ended in scandal when the mad Scarlet Witch caused Tony to engage in drunken and belligerent behavior at the United Nations. Disgraced, Stark was quickly drummed out of his government position. The Scarlet Witch's growing insanity led to the dissolution of the Avengers when her out-of-control powers wrecked Avengers Mansion and killed several teammates, including Hawkeye and Ant-Man (Lang). Tony was further smeared when one-time corporate rival Clarence Ward stole Iron Man armor, using it to kill the Stark Industries board and Rumiko. Iron Man defeated Ward, and recalled all of the Iron Man armors he had granted to the military. He then publicly "resigned" as Iron Man but secretly intended to continue operating as Iron Man, claiming that it was once again a different man in the armor.

Iron Man encountered Mallen, a terrorist enhanced by the Extremis virus, a techno-organic agent designed by Tony's one-time classmate Maya Hansen and intentionally leaked so that the world could see its destructive potential. After Mallen defeated Iron Man, Tony had Maya inject him with the Extremis so that he could meet Mallen as an equal. The process resulted in Stark's body rebuilding itself with superior organs, and Tony found that he could now store his Iron Man armor's undersheath within his bones and release it when armoring up; he was now able to link to virtually any computer on Earth and process dozens of simultaneous tasks with his brain. The newly-enhanced Tony killed Mallen in a rematch.

With Captain America, Tony helped restart the Avengers, this time including heroes such as Spider-Man (Peter Parker) and Wolverine among their ranks, and he provided his midtown Manhattan skyscraper Stark Tower as their new base of operations. Jarvis was rehired to serve the Avengers at the tower. Tony became a mentor to Spider-Man, and encouraged him to move his aunt May and wife Mary Jane into Stark

Tower when their home was lost in an attack. Tony also provided Peter with a suit of personal armor that enhanced his abilities. Learning of Congress' interest in a Superhuman Registration Act (SHRA), Tony brought Peter with him in an attempt to halt the proceedings, secretly employing his old foe the Titanium Man to start a battle in order to demonstrate the value of super heroes.

Tony learned that while he was a prisoner of Wong-Chu, Professor Yinsen had implanted a device in his brain which could place him under the control of a sending unit now held by Yinsen's son. Believing that Tony had betrayed his father's ideals, Yinsen's son took control of Iron Man and forced him to execute surviving members of Wong-Chu's network. When a SHIELD sniper killed the son, it activated a failsafe program that sent four of Tony's latest armors on a worldwide rampage. Aided by the Avengers and Fantastic Four, Tony halted his armors, but the incident left him wondering if superhumans did require supervision from higher authorities.

After a fight between the New Warriors and Nitro in Stamford, Connecticut resulted in the deaths of many schoolchildren, pressure mounted to make the SHRA law. This time, Tony supported the measures, believing that if the super hero community did not take charge of the situation, they would become powerless before an all-powerful government. Most of Stark's fellow Illuminati disagreed with his views, and they disbanded on bad terms. Collaborating with Yellowjacket (Pym) and Mr. Fantastic to develop pro-SHRA initiatives and leading the pro-SHRA movement, Tony once again made his double identity public knowledge as part of his support for the act; however, Captain America disagreed with Tony and led an underground resistance against the new law. Gradually disillusioned by the questionable morality of the pro-registration forces in general and Stark in particular, Tony's protégé Spider-Man soon joined the resistance, too. In order to combat Captain America's forces, Tony made an alliance with Baron Zemo of the Thunderbolts, and began conscripting super-villains into government service. Tony also secretly manufactured a war between the U.S. and Atlantis, believing that it would convince more super heroes to come forward and register themselves. Ultimately, Captain America surrendered when he realized the general public did not support his position; he was soon assassinated by agents of the Red Skull while in custody, much to Iron Man's dismay. Tony Stark has become the director of SHIELD (Nick Fury having gone rogue earlier), and he appointed Ms. Marvel (Carol Danvers) the new leader of the Avengers; however, Spider-Man and other dissidents continue to oppose the SHRA through their own outlaw faction of the Avengers.

HEIGHT: (Stark) 6'1" (in armor) 6'6"
WEIGHT: (Stark) 225 lbs.; (in armor) 425 lbs.
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Black

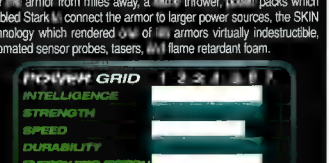
ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Tony Stark's entire body has been [illegible] by the techno-organic Extremis virus, granting him enhanced [illegible] and reflexes. He can link his brain into virtually any computer on Earth, and perform dozens of tasks simultaneously. His Iron Man armor's nanotechnology is stored within his bones, and he can summon it forth when he is donning his armor. The armor itself is magnetically drawn to the undersheath, assembling itself around Stark's body within seconds.

Tony's current armor possesses many of his past armors' standard attributes, and can be carried within a briefcase while disassembled. The armor's memory-metal technology renders it lightweight and flexible while not in use, but extremely durable while polarized. The armor is also defended by an energy-draining shield which expands from the gauntlets, and by a personal force field. The armor grants its wearer superhuman strength enabling him to lift up to 100 tons. The armor's jet boots can propel him at speeds up to mach 8. The armor is specially coated to radar resistance and avoidance of targeting locks, and can be rendered invisible (cloaked) for brief stealth modes. Its internal air supply lasts over one hour, and the armor can be sealed for travel through low oxygen, underwater or outer space environments. The armor's computer includes an autopilot and targeting sensors, features which Stark has little use for since receiving the Extremis. The computer's cybernetic link enables Stark to operate all of the armor's functions, as well as providing a remote link to other computers. Tony has refined the cybernetic link to defend his mind against outside control, as the armor has often left his mind vulnerable to psychic attacks. The armor also features radar and environment sensors. The armor contains a sophisticated subspace/satellite radio communications array which can also provide local radio signals. In case of capture, the armor is equipped with a self-destruct mechanism.

The armor's exotic features include Tony's primary energy weapon, repulsor rays, a powerful particle beam weapon designed to [illegible] attacks. The chestplate features the unibeam, a powerful searchlight which can project beams in virtually every light spectrum (visible, infrared, and ultraviolet). The unibeam also features a laser [illegible] projector, an EMP (Electro Magnetic Pulse) generator that can shut down electronic devices within a 50-yard radius. The armor itself can reboot within [illegible] minutes, and a holographic generator which can both disguise the armor and project images to distract and confuse opponents. The armor has also been outfitted with pulse bolts (extremely powerful plasma discharges), sonic generators, magnetic field generators and a laser torch.

Stark has also designed a number of specialized armors for particular environments and situations. These include the Hulkbuster, his most powerful armor, originally designed to combat the Hulk. Similarly, his "Thorbuster" model was designed to combat Thor, and combined Stark's technology with Asgardian magic. He has also employed various stealth armors, which are virtually immune to detection but have little raw power: one model was constructed of non-metallic materials. His deep submerge armors are designed for missions up to 3 miles beneath the ocean; his space, outer atmosphere and high-gravity armors are designed for extensive off-world missions. His ablative armor was constructed using a series of self-replacing chips so that damage made to the structure would be instantly repaired, and his arctic armor was designed for extended periods in below-zero environments. His tunneler armor was designed to bore through solid rock; his anti-radiation armor was designed for travel through radiation-contaminated areas.

Stark maintains copies of his earlier styles of armor. Features of his earlier suits which he no longer maintains included additions such as a laser-proof coating, missile launchers, mini-guns, mini-canons, nelgun, jet propelled roller skates built into the boots, a diamond-tipped blade concealed within a gauntlet, a hand saw built into a gauntlet, a portable proton beam, tear gas, explosives, suction cups built into the boots, a magnetic field generator which served as his pacemaker while the shrapnel was within his heart, an energy blade located in the gauntlets, a telepresence unit which enabled Stark complete control over the armor from miles away, a flame thrower, power packs which enabled Stark to connect the armor to larger power sources, the SKIN technology which rendered one of his armors virtually indestructible, automated sensor probes, tasers, and flame retardant foam.



Art by Sal Buscema

which could turn imagination into reality. Carol's dreams of flight and her envy of Mar-Vell's powers led the machine to alter her genetically, effectively making her a half-Kree superhuman; however, this change was gradual, and Carol was unaware of it for months. After the Sentry reactivated and damaged the Cape before departing in pursuit of the Avengers, Carol's continued inability to control superhuman incursions led to her removal and she reassigned to a minor NASA facility near Chicago. After Nitro raided that base, Carol was demoted to a mere security guard and returned to Cape Canaveral. Not long after another alien incursion, Carol learned that Michael Rossi had died in a plane crash (he actually survived, though Carol remains unaware of this). In the aftermath of this loss and her plummeting career, Carol resigned from NASA.

Living off accumulated salary, Carol wrote an angry tell-all exposé on NASA, burning many bridges. The best selling book briefly made Carol a celebrity, and she wrote for national magazines like Rolling Stone; however, she also developed a dual personality due to the Psyche-Magnitron's alterations. She would black out and become a Kree warrior, instantaneously donning a costume which the Psyche-Magnitron had created for her to ease her body's changes. These blackouts seriously alarmed Carol, but didn't stop her from accepting a New York position as chief editor at the Woman Magazine. In times of stress, she would continue to transform into her Kree alter ego, who soon took the name Ms. Marvel after Mar-Vell. Over the next few months her fragmented mind slowly recovered, first pushed by the benevolent interference of the extradimensional Hecate, and then completely healed when Ronan subjected her to the mind-altering Millennia Bloom device. Meanwhile, she established herself as one of New York's premiere heroines, working with Spider-Man, the Defenders, the Avengers and others, and becoming friendly with the Avengers' Wonder Man. When the Avengers' Scarlet Witch took a leave of absence, Carol took her place as a full-fledged Avenger.

Carol reveled in her new status, aiding the team against foes like Chthon, the Absorbing Man and the Grey Gargoyle, and fitting in personally as well, even joining their regular poker games; however, things began to grow bleak when Carol was fired from her editorial job due to her frequent disappearances. She rescued her presumed-dead friend, astronaut Salia Petrie, from the alien Faceless One, only to discover Salia was severely traumatized. Carol's psychiatrist and close friend, Michael Barnett, was murdered by mutant shape-shifter Mystique, whose precognitive associate Destiny had warned her that Carol would hurt Mystique's foster-daughter Rogue. Barnett's murder pulled Ms. Marvel into conflict with the Hellfire Club and Mystique's Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, but before she could track down Mystique, Carol became impossibly pregnant. Her extradimensional admirer Marcus, the son of Immortus, had kidnapped Carol to timeless Limbo, wooed her with a "subtle boost" from mind-influencing devices, impregnated himself into her, and returned her to Earth with no memory of this. The pregnancy came to term in less than two days and Carol delivered the child, Marcus, who grew to adulthood in one day; however, Marcus continued to age quickly towards death. Still under the lingering mental influence of his devices, Carol told the Avengers she loved Marcus and accompanied him back to Limbo. Once there, his rapid aging unexpectedly continued and he soon died, leaving Carol trapped in Limbo. She eventually found her way home and, resenting the Avengers for not seeing through Marcus, gave up her Ms. Marvel identity and settled down in San Francisco. Mystique continued plotting Carol's downfall, however, and Rogue decided to remove this thorn from her foster-mother's side, attacking Carol herself. Their battle atop the Golden Gate Bridge ended when Rogue's absorption of Carol's powers, memories and emotions accidentally became permanent. Thrown from the bridge, Carol was rescued by Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew), who brought the powerless and near-amnesiac Carol to Professor Charles Xavier for treatment. He helped restore most of her memories, though her emotional ties to them remained lost. After a bitter confrontation with the Avengers, Carol remained with Xavier and his X-Men, working to restore her mind.

Carol aided the X-Men for several weeks, and led them in infiltrating the Pentagon to delete their governmental records. She encountered Rogue and Mystique there for the first time since their attacks on her; while the X-Men defeated Rogue, Carol captured Mystique and turned her over to the authorities. Soon after, Carol and the X-Men were captured by the alien Brood. Fascinated by her genetic structure, they manipulated Carol's physiology up and down the evolutionary scale before she was freed by Wolverine. These manipulations transformed Carol into the energy-wielding Binary, and she helped defeat the Brood, destroying their homeworld and the outworld of Madrizar, and freeing the Brood's slave race, the Acanti. She returned home with the X-Men, but her childhood dreams of space travel beckoned. After an emotionless farewell to her parents, she returned to Xavier's only to find they had allowed Rogue to join their group; after punching Rogue through the roof, Carol departed the team for good, unable to stomach their acceptance of Rogue despite understanding their reasons for it. She departed Earth, joining the space-faring Starjammers.

With the Starjammers, Carol traveled with exiled Shi'ar ruler Lilandra Neramani and aided her when she and her embittered sister Deathbird (a former foe of Carol's from her early days as Ms. Marvel) fought to win the power of the Phoenix to increase their positions. When the Kree-Shi'ar War menaced Earth's sun, Carol nearly burned out her own powers in saving the sun and was hospitalized in Avengers Headquarters for weeks, during which time she made peace with her past as an Avenger. When Starjammer Raza was bribed to kill the Avengers' Black Knight (Dane Whitman), Binary ended the conflict and falsified a story about Raza being mind-controlled; afterwards she decided to remain on Earth, feeling that she had been running from her problems. She moved into her parents' Beverly, Massachusetts home and began a semi-autobiographical science fiction novel titled "Binary;" she also worked with Peter Corbeau of Starcore in orbital projects, as well as with other heroes. Binary was one of the first to oppose the alien Skeletron when he pushed the Moon out of orbit. With Quasar (Wendell Vaughn) and other allies she pursued Skeletron to the Stranger's World; wanting full-strength allies against Skeletron, the Stranger restored Carol's damaged psyche, briefly giving her full access to her lost memories and buried emotions, though they soon faded. When another alien plot destabilized the wormhole from which Carol drew her powers, she worked with the X-Men to restore it; weeks later, she realized this had failed when her Binary powers ceased replenishing themselves. Burdened by the memories of her short-lived emotional reconnection to her past and her belief that her powers were fading, Carol began drinking heavily.

Art by Paul Smith

When the disbanded Avengers reformed while facing Morgan Le Fay, Carol rejoined the team

Art by Olivier Coipel

as Warbird. Though her powers had stabilized at her old Ms. Marvel levels, she kept the loss of her Binary-level powers secret. Her drinking led to bad judgment calls against Kree enemies, and the Avengers called a special tribunal to investigate Warbird's actions. When it looked like Carol would be demoted to reserve status, she quit before a decision was reached. She moved to Seattle and resumed writing while her first novel successfully saw print; a contract for several others followed. Meanwhile, Avengers founder Iron Man (Tony Stark) had also relocated to Seattle, and the recovered alcoholic Stark tried to offer Carol guidance despite her resistance. She bottomed out when, during an alcoholic blackout, she threw Iron Man through the wing of a passenger jet. She and Iron Man saved the passengers, but Carol finally realized she had a problem and began attending AA meetings. She revealed her identity to governmental authorities and took responsibility for the crash; much to her surprise, the judge gave her a suspended sentence, demanding that she rejoin the Avengers and that they supervise her.

Back with the Avengers and no longer drinking, Carol came into her own. She drew the standoffish Triathlon closer into the team, played a role in ending the Shi'ar conversion of Earth into a "prison planet," led an Avengers contingent against a Deviant army in China, and led a mission to find the Master during Kang's invasion of Earth. On the latter mission she encountered Kang's son Marcus, a virtual duplicate of the Marcus who had once kidnapped her. After her initial revulsion she accepted his aid against the Master's creatures and Carol defeated the Master herself, stabbing him through the chest (Carol would later demand she be court-martialed for this "murder," ultimately being declared innocent of wrongdoing). Carol was central to the defeat of Kang's invasion when she destroyed his orbital Damocles base. Later, after the Avengers helped contain the "Red Zone" disaster, the U.S. President offered Carol a position as Chief Tactical Officer for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); she accepted, leaving the Avengers.

Carol recruited the Thunderbolts' Dallas Riordan to work with her at the DHS, but chafed at the deskwork and kept slipping into costume — she teamed with Wolverine and Captain America against Rapture and Project Contingency (a renegade SHIELD anti-mutant operation), with the Thunderbolts against Fathom Five and Baron Strucker's Hydra forces, and with several heroes against Titannus. The CSA (Commission on Superhuman Activities) cornered her into approving an assault by the Thunderbolts on the Avengers, and her discontent grew. Eventually, the mad Scarlet Witch altered reality to create a mutant-ruled Earth where Carol, despite her non-mutant status, was that world's greatest hero as Captain Marvel. When the world was restored to normal, Carol retained her Captain Marvel memories, and decided she was wasting her time in a desk job. She resigned from the DHS, resolving to make herself into the hero she now knew she could be.

Carol hired an agent, Sarah Day, to help with her public image, and Day suggested she reassume her Ms. Marvel name. Carol subsequently defeated a Brood army and the Brood-hunting Cru, aided the Avengers against the Collective, was present at the birth of close friend Jessica Jones' baby, and served as the maid of honor at Jessica's wedding. She battled Warren Traveler, a dimension-lost foe from the reality in which she had been Captain Marvel, and battled Titannus again, all while conducting TV interviews and maintaining a very public blog. When the Super Human Registration Act passed, Carol became one of its strongest supporters. With a team of pro-registration friends, Carol apprehended anti-registration heroes like the Prowler, Shroud and Arachne, and worked to train would-be heroes like Araña. Asked by Iron Man to head a new Avengers roster, she agreed on the condition that she also be given control of her own elite strike force, known as Operation: Lightning Storm. Carol uses this force to right what she sees as the world's wrongs, undertaking missions too quiet or too questionable for the Avengers.

HEIGHT: 5'11"
WEIGHT: 124 lbs.
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Blonde

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Carol is fluent in English, Russian and another unrevealed Earth language, as well as Kree and Shi'ar languages. She speaks passable Rigelin and has a limited vocabulary in many other languages. Carol is an accomplished pilot, having extensive experience with USAF planes as well as with Kree, Shi'ar and other alien starships. She is extensively trained in armed and unarmed combat, including numerous martial arts. Immensely strong-willed and able to endure incredible physical pain, Carol is a recovering alcoholic. As head of Operation: Lightning Storm, she controls an elite team of mostly SHIELD agents operating from a smaller version of SHIELD's Helicarrier known as a minicarrier.

The Psyche-Magnitron transformed Carol into a peak human, statistically as fit as humanly possible, and also modified her DNA with Kree genes. It gave her the powers of flight, superhuman strength sufficient to press 70 tons following subsequent genetic alterations), and great resistance to damage, as well as "seventh-sense" precognitive flashes and the ability to change into her costume instantaneously. Six months after her transformation, the Psyche-Magnitron gifted her with a suit which enabled her to survive in space and which was designed to ease her body's continuing transformation; however, this suit was eventually destroyed. After Carol lost her powers to Rogue, she maintained her "near-human" status though she lacked superpowers, save apparently the ability to change instantaneously into costume.

As Binary, Carol tapped into a white hole, channeling its energies through her body to create any form of radiation or gravity. The white hole boosted her strength and endurance levels far beyond her old Ms. Marvel levels, and she could survive indefinitely in space. The subsequent loss of access to the white hole didn't change Carol's powers, merely the level at which they function — she can still fly, can still project photonic blasts, and still possesses extreme strength and the ability to withstand damage at approximately her original Ms. Marvel levels. These powers are maintained by ambient energy absorbed from her environment, and as a result she can have negative effects on sensitive machinery. She can temporarily augment her powers by absorbing energy forms, most notably electromagnetic radiation, plasma and sonics; however, unless Carol is prepared, her energy absorption is rarely instantaneous, so she draws only miniscule power from many energy attacks and can still be damaged by these. Without energy sources, Carol can no longer survive unaided in space.

TRAITS: The Olympian gods are all stronger than Earthly mortals; an average god can lift 25-30 tons. They do not age once they reach adulthood (and several have been born-full grown), are immune to all Earthly diseases, and are highly resistant to damage. With time, they can recover from virtually any injury. Some gods have further "magical" powers — for example, as god of the sea Poseidon has extensive water control abilities. Virtually all Olympian gods draw some power through Zeus and are thus bound to the Promethean Flame, located in the Temple of the Promethean Flame in the Hall of Zeus in Olympus. Since the times of the Titans, this flame has empowered the Olympians; if it is doused, the Olympians are banished to Hades as insubstantial spirits until such time as it is restored.

The Olympian gods have been worshipped by various cultures, primarily Greek, Roman and Atlantean; it is not unusual for a god to have different names in different languages. The Eternals' city of Olympia is located near the Mount Olympus gateway to Olympus, and a number of Eternals have been confused with similarly named gods or Titans (Zeus-Zuras, Ouranos-Uranus), but the two peoples are not related.

Virtually all Olympian gods can trace lineage back to Ouranos, though not all of his descendants were considered gods. The title of "god" has eventually became more one of social acceptance than of lineage, though those more closely related to Zeus' line generally hold higher status in Olympus. There are also a number of "demigods" — those descended from the mating of an Olympian god and someone or something else — but again, the only significant difference between the gods and demigods of Olympus seems to be in social status.

HEIGHT: 6' (average)
WEIGHT: 500 lbs. (average)
EYES: Full human range
SKIN: Full human range

HISTORY: In the early ages of the Earth, a sentient life-force developed which would one day become known as the Demiurge. He birthed the Elder Gods, who eventually warred among themselves until one of them, Atum, transformed itself into the Demogorge and devoured or chased away all but himself and Gaea, also known as Mother Earth. Atum would reform from the Demogorge and leave Earth, dispersing the energies he had absorbed into the planet. When mankind eventually began rising towards sentience, their dreams gave form to the abandoned energies; this transformed those who would become the progenitors of mankind's gods, notably the Olympians, regarded as deities by the peoples of ancient Greece and the Roman Empire.

Mythology holds that Gaea, the sole remaining Elder God, gave birth to Ouranos. She then mated with him, and they parented the first Olympians, the Titans. They resided in an interdimensional pocket universe in the city known as Olympus, though the city's origins are unrevealed. Ouranos was eventually slain by his son, Chronus, who feared the same treatment from his own children and began imprisoning them in a dank underworld known as Hades. Before Chronus could similarly banish his sixth child, his wife Rhea fled through a dimensional portal to Earth, arriving near Greece's Mount Olympus, where the child was raised among shepherds. After reaching adulthood this child, Zeus, freed his siblings Demeter, Hera, Neptune, Pluto and Vesta from Hades and led them in a war against their father, a war they would eventually win. Zeus imprisoned most of the surviving Titans in Hades and set himself up as ruler of Olympus, taking his sister Hera as his queen. Pluto was asked to rule over the underworld and guard its prisoners, and Zeus set his other siblings to watch over the planet where he grew up — Poseidon to rule Earth's seas, Demeter to watch over the land, and Vesta to watch over the people. His rivals thus occupied elsewhere, Zeus ruled a peaceful Olympus for centuries while he and his siblings populated the realm through interbreeding with humans, extradimensionals, Titans, and whatever else caught their fancy. Select mortals or aliens were occasionally added to the pantheon as well, sometimes further empowered by Zeus.

GODS: Achelous, Aphrodite/Venus, Apollo/Phoebus, Ares, Artemis, Asklepios, Athena/Athene, Bellona, Cupid/Eros, Demeter, Dionysus, Furies (Alecto, Megaera, Tisiphone), Hebe, Hephaestus, Hera, Hermes, Hippolyta, Joya, Livilla, Momos, Neptunia, Pan, Persephone, Phobos, Pluto, Poseidon/Neptune, Priapus, Psyche, Tharamus, Vesta, Zeus; many others
DEMIGODS: Aeneas, Bia, Deimos & Phobos (sons of Ares & Nox, apparently destroyed), Hercules, Kratos, Tantalus (confined to Hades); many others
TITANS (most confined to Hades): Atlas, Chronus, Epimetheus, Iapetus, Menoetius, Mnemosyne, Ouranos (destroyed), Prometheus, Rhea, Tityus, Typhon; many others
OTHERS: Amazons, Centaurs (Centaurion, Nessus), Centimanes (Kottus), Cerebrus/Cerebus, Chaga (witch of the Black Moor), Charon, Charybdis, Cyclopes (Arges, Argus, Polyphemus), Delphic Oracles (Cylla, Sibylla, Thaleia), Fates, Gorgons, Greek heroes, Harpies, Huntsman, Minotaurs, Satyrs, Scylla, Sirens, Yellow-Crested Titans; many others
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Olympus
FIRST APPEARANCE: Human Torch Comics #5A (1941)

Art by Tom Grummett

Under the gods' watchful eyes, the Olympians' worshippers flourished, especially the Greek, Roman and Atlantean civilizations. The Olympians soon found themselves drawn into conflicts with other gods, in particular the Asgardian gods of Northern Europe and the Ennead of Northern Africa; however, the coming of the world-threatening Celestials taught these gods that there were greater threats to their world than each other, and Zeus and his fellow leaders created the Council of Godheads and made a pact that despite individual conflicts, the pantheons would never go to war as a whole. When Zeus and the Asgardian leader Odin were unable to head off a war between their peoples, they cooperated to alter the minds of every warrior, leading each to believe briefly they had won. The Celestials' existence also drew Zeus' attention to the Eternals, ■ Celestial-manipulated offshoot of mankind with powers which made them seem godlike to humanity. Their city Olympia lay near Mount Olympus, and Zeus and his daughter Athena met with the Eternals to negotiate a treaty by which the Eternals would act for the gods on Earth; despite their best intentions, this led to repeated confusion between similarly named gods and Eternals, heightening each society's resentment of the other. When the time came for a final confrontation with the Celestials, Zeus used his people's annoyance towards the Eternals ■ motivation to lead them in an invasion of Olympia, though he soon withdrew when ■ proved unprofitable.

With the exception of Poseidon, who still actively watches over the Atlantean peoples, Zeus and the Olympians gradually withdrew from Earth over the centuries. This changed dramatically in the 20th century when individual humans began developing godlike characteristics of their own; individual Olympians investigated and involved themselves with humanity, most notably Aphrodite, the goddess of love (occasionally impersonated as Venus by ■ mystically transformed siren); Ares, the god of war; Dionysus, the god of drink; and Hercules, a warrior prince who joined the Avengers, ■ mostly mortal team of super-heroes. As always, Zeus allowed these excursions, particularly since he himself had grown concerned about his brother Pluto, who had tired of ruling Hades and now coveted Olympus. When the Asgardian Enchantress controlled Ares into stealing the Promethean Flame and thus banished the Olympian Gods to Hades, Hercules led his fellow Avengers into Olympus to reignite the flame and restore the gods. The Avengers were hailed as heroes, but when other mortal heroes such as the Champions and the Thing similarly rescued the gods, Zeus grew worried about humanity's effect on his realm. When Zeus' son Hercules was brutally beaten and Zeus unfairly held the Avengers responsible, they not only escaped from Hades but invaded Olympus, turned several of his children and siblings against him, and almost held their own in battle with him. After finally agreeing to allow the Avengers to leave, Zeus ruled that his Olympians should never again set foot on Earth unless they were willing to give up their godhood; however, by this point gods and mortals had become too involved in each other's lives, and in the following years the Avengers would twice more enter Olympus and come to the rescue of the gods. Realizing the futility of his attempts at isolation, Zeus reversed his edict following the apparent destruction of the Asgardian pantheon, and even began studying humanity himself, forming the Olympus Corporation with several of the more important deities.

In recent days, Olympus has been invaded twice by other pantheons — once by the Dark Gods, an extraterrestrial race of gods, and then by Mikaboshi of the Amatsu-kami, leading the remnants of the Japanese spirits (he had already destroyed much of his own pantheon) against Olympus. Though devastated in both assaults, eternal Olympus is always rebuilt — but the disappearance of Zeus during the latter battle leaves the vacant throne of Olympus as a tempting plum for many.

NOTE: *Significantly divergent incarnations of the Olympian gods appear in Daring Mystery Comics #6 (1940); how or if they relate to the true Olympians remains to be seen. Questions also remain concerning possibly genuine gods seen in Venus #1-19 (1948-1952).*

ARGES
Avengers Annual #23 (1994)

CENTAURS
Journey into Mystery Annual #1 (1965)

CERBERUS
Thor #130 (1967)

CHAGA
Thor #222 (1974)

CHARON
Captain America's Weird Tales #74 (1949)

CHARYBDIS
Sub-Mariner #29 (1970)

CYCLOPES
Tales of Suspense #10 (1960)

CYLLA
Marvel Premiere 26 (1975)

GORGONS
Tales of Suspense #10 (1960)

HARPIES
Champions #1 (1975)

HUNTSMAN
Kid Zar ■ (1970)

KOTTUS (A CENTIMANE)
Avengers Annual #23 (1994)

MINOTAURS
Avengers #17 (1965)

PROMETHEUS
Avengers ■■■ (1967)

SATYRS
Journey into Mystery Annual #1 (1965)

SCYLLA
Sub-Mariner ■■■ (1970)

SIBYLLA
Dr. Strange #46 (1981)

SIRENS
Sub-Mariner #29 (1970)

TYPHON
Avengers #49 (1968)

YELLOW-CRESTED TITANS
Thor #129 (1967)

OLYMPUS: Olympus exists in a vast extradimensional pocket, and does not always follow Earth's physical laws. It can be accessed through any number of portals, but several have particular significance. At Olympus' south end, the Gates of Hell transport one to the Pathway of Infinity, which leads to Pluto's realm of Hades. The underworld itself can also be reached through the Pit of Hades in Olympus proper, generally kept sealed on the Olympus end, though transport from Olympus to Hades through the Pit consists of a fall lasting several days. East from Olympus is the gate to Greece — this can be completed as a one day climb/descent of Olympus' base, or a six day plummet from Olympus' edge. Other temporary gates to Earth have occasionally been created

by deities desiring them, but they require immense energies to maintain and are usually short-lived. To the west of Olympus are two dimensional bridges: one to an alternate Earth which serves as home to many of the Greek heroes as well as to Hippolyta's Amazons, and one to the regions of Ossa and Pelion, wilder, untamed areas where occasional rogue cyclopes and titans still roam, as well as some of the other more monstrous creatures from Greek mythology. Another gate exists in the western forests, this one a series of caves which connect to multiple realms; one cave exits in Asgard, at the mountains of Jotunheim (in fact, the ancestors of Jotunheim's storm giants were rumored to have been driven from early Olympus).

Viewed from above, Olympus is a small but beautiful Grecian city built atop a mountain, climbing steadily as one moves north and peaking at the Eagle Seat. From the side, it looks something like a barbell standing on end, with a broad base where the gate to Earth lies, a steep mountainous climb through the barbell's "handle," and with the city of Olympus placed on the top end of the barbell. A variety of "stars" and "planets" move above and around Olympus; a very few of these actually are inhabited by Olympian exiles (and others by alien races), though interactions with the denizens of these are exceedingly rare. The giants Krokarr, Manduu and Y'Androgg have previously invaded Olympus from one of these planets. Olympus itself is populated by its deities and their descendents, by those who have been brought there to serve, and by a fortunate few allowed to live there (or who hide in the forests). While the majority of Olympus' residents appear human, it is not uncommon to find centaurs, satyrs and nymphs within the city proper. Olympus' worst criminals are confined to Hades, while lesser offenders might find themselves exiled to a neighboring realm.

Most of the elder deities of Olympus have their own temples, halls, or gardens, and the Hall of Zeus houses the heavily guarded Temple of the Promethean Flame. A now-slain captive Titan originally served as its ward, but demigods Kratos and Bia now lead the Temple's guards.

ALECTO
Maiden Fury
Ghost Rider #77 (1996)

APHRODITE
Goddess of Love
Sub-Mariner #57 (1973)

APOLLO
Phoebus God of the Sun
Thor Annual #5 (1976)

ARES
God of War
Human Torch Comics #5A (1941)

ARTEMIS
Goddess of the Hunt
Thor #129 (1967)

ASKLEPIOS
God of Healing
Ares #4 (2006)

ATHENA
Goddess of Wisdom
Thor #164 (1969)

BELLONA
Goddess of War
Dr. Strange #54 (1993)

[redacted] (DEMIGOD)
Guardian of the Promethean Flame
Avengers #50 (1968)

CUPID
God of Love
Avengers #283 (1987)

DEIMOS (DEMIGOD)
Son of Ares & Nox
Dr. Strange #32 (1991)

DEMETER
Harvest Goddess
Avengers #50 (1968)

DIONYSUS
God of Wine
Journey into Mystery Annual #1 (1965)

HEBE
Goddess of Youth
Ka-Zar #1 (1970)

HEPHAESTUS
God of the Forge
Thor #129 (1967)

HERA
Queen of the Gods
Thor #129 (1967)

HERCULES (DEMIGOD)
Prince of Power
Journey into Mystery Annual #1 (1965)

HERMES
Messenger God
Thor #129 (1967)

HIPPOLYTA
Ruler of Amazons & Bacchae
Thor #127 (1967)

JOYA
Goddess of Joy
Marvel Valentine Special 1 (1997)

KRATOS (DEMIGOD)
Guardian of the Promethean Flame
Avengers #50 (1968)

LIVILLA
Goddess of Deceit
Dr. Strange #46 (1981)

MEGAERA
Crone Fury
Avengers #50 (1968)

MOMOS
God of Mirth
Avengers Annual 23 (1994)

NEPTUNIA
Sea Goddess
Venus #18 (1952)

PAN
God of Herds
Journey into Mystery Annual #1 (1965)

PERSEPHONE
Goddess of Corn, Wife of Pluto
Avengers Annual #23 (1994)

PHOBOS (DEMIGOD)
Son of Ares & Nox
Dr. Strange #32 (1991)

PLUTO
God of the Underworld
Thor #127 (1967)

POSEIDON NEPTUNE
God of the Sea
Tales to Astonish #70 (1965)

PRIAPUS
God of Sexuality
Terror Inc. #10 (1993)

PSYCHE
Goddess of Fidelity
Marvel Super Heroes #9 (1992)

THARAMUS
God of Learning
Hercules & the Heart of Chaos #1 (1995)

TISIPHONE
Matron Fury
Ghost Rider #77 (1996)

VESTA
Hearth Goddess
Thor #301 (1980)

ZEUS
Pantheon Leader
Journey into Mystery Annual #1 (1965)

1. PATHWAY OF INFINITY
2. GATES OF HELL
3. THE WATERGATE
4. TITANS' ENCLAVE
5. SPRING OF ARTEMIS
6. PILLARS OF THE BRIDGE LEADING TO THE HOMELANDS OF THE ORIGINAL OLYMPIANS
7. PLACE OF PAIN
8. FOREST OF THE HUNTRESS
9. THE BLACK MOOR - CHAGA'S HUT
10. ARENA OF ARES (CIRCLE OF COMBAT)
11. PIT OF HADES
12. HALL OF DREAM
13. GARDEN OF ATHENA
14. HALL OF SONG
15. AMPHITHEATRE
16. HALL OF HEPHAESTUS (FORGES BELOW)
17. PANTHEON HALL
18. THE GOLDEN STREET
19. HALL OF ATHENA (ARCHIVES)
20. HEARTH OF VESTA
21. STAIR OF JUDGMENT
22. BARRACKS OF THE YELLOW-CRESTED TITANS
23. DIMENSIONAL BRIDGE TO EARTH OF GREEK HEROES
24. CAVE OF THE ORACLES
25. HALL OF ZEUS
26. FOUNTAIN OF EROS
27. HALL OF ARES
28. HALL OF DIONYSUS
29. TOWER OF THE SUN
30. HALL OF APOLLO
31. HALL OF APHRODITE
32. PUBLIC BATHS
33. DIMENSIONAL BRIDGE TO OSSUS, PELION AND OTHER LANDS
34. TEMPLE OF THE PROMETHEAN FLAME

Art by Eliot R. Brown

HISTORY: The ultimate self-made man, veteran adventurer Clint Barton has reinvented himself repeatedly over the years. Clint and his older brother Barney grew up in the town of Waverly, Iowa, where they worked in their father Harold's butcher shop after school. Successful and popular, Harold had a drinking problem and a bad temper that made him physically and verbally abusive with his family; his wife Edith tried to protect her sons, but was not always successful. While Barney grew resentful, Clint compensated by working harder to please his father, trying to be a better son in hopes of spurring Harold to be a better parent. It never worked, and Harold eventually killed himself and Edith in a drunk driving accident when Clint was eight years old. Clint and Barney were placed in the Saint Ignatius Home for Orphaned Boys, but they were too old in the eyes of most prospective parents and spent years being passed over for adoption. Bitter and bored, Barney bullied Clint, who responded by doing all their chores and trying to be a better brother. Clint also found occasional relief in a pile of old Western pulp novels left at the orphanage, the Old West being one of the few subjects that interested him during his early schooling. This interest may have stemmed in part from a family connection, as Clint's ancestor Brett Barton was the sheriff in Tombstone during the heyday of the Two-Gun Kid (Matt Hawk), a legendary masked gunman.

When Clint was fourteen, Barney ran away from the orphanage and Clint reluctantly came along. The fast-talking Barney soon landed the brothers menial jobs with the Carson Carnival of Traveling Wonders, a traveling circus. The Bartons came to regard the carnival folk as their new family, though Clint was oblivious to the fact that the carnival owner's tomboy daughter, Marcy Carson, had a long-standing crush on him. The boys were more interested in the carnival's performers, especially the Swordsman (Jacques Duquesne), a supremely skillful master of bladed weapons. When the Swordsman's assistant quit after deciding their act was too dangerous, Clint eagerly took her place. Impressed by the boy's nerve, Swordsman began teaching him knife throwing so he could become a bigger part of the act. Duquesne gradually became a father figure of sorts to Clint, who worked desperately to earn his mentor's approval.

Trouble arrived in the form of Trick Shot (Buck Chisholm), an unscrupulous archer who fast eclipsed the Swordsman as the carnival's star attraction. Beating Chisholm badly in a card game, Duquesne offered to forgive Chisholm's debt in exchange for Trick Shot teaching Clint archery, hoping to add some extra appeal to their act. Trick Shot agreed and began tutoring Barton, who proved to have a natural flair for archery. Adopting a buckskin costume and taking the stage name Hawkeye, Clint aspired to be the equal of his partner the Swordsman, but the insecure Duquesne resented Barton's growing skill and became increasingly irritable as his own gambling debts mounted. Meanwhile, Chisholm talked Clint into helping him pull off petty crimes and con games outside the carnival. By this time, Barney had matured somewhat and grew tired of the carnival life, getting his general equivalency diploma. He encouraged Clint to consider leaving the business, and discouraged him from getting mixed up with criminals.

Deeply in debt to a mob-connected loan shark named Marko, the Swordsman robbed the carnival paymaster. When Clint caught him in the act and refused to go along with the crime, Duquesne attacked him, pursuing Clint onto the trapeze and cutting the high wire out from under him. Badly injured by the fall, Clint might have been killed if Barney and Trick Shot had not arrived in time to chase off the Swordsman and take Clint to the hospital. Barney was furious with Clint over his near-fatal association with criminals, though a half-conscious, pain-wracked Clint interpreted his brother's anger as frustration over Clint having passed up the easy money from the payroll robbery. Shunned for a time by Barney, Clint was in hospital with two broken legs when Trick Shot offered to make Clint his new protégé and continue teaching him archery while his injuries healed. Seeing no other options, Clint accepted.

REAL NAME: Clinton Francis "Clint" Barton

ALIASES: Formerly Hawkeye, the Marksman, "Br'er Hawkeye," Seagate Superhuman Cellblock Prisoner 334556, Longbow, Goliath, Father Time, Louis, Robin Hood, the Hawkeye Kid, Golden Archer, "Purple Man": impersonated Constrictor & Dreadknight

IDENTITY: Secret

OCCUPATION: Outlaw adventurer, revolutionary; former professional super hero, fugitive, unofficial SHIELD operative, federal inmate, CTE security chief, ranch hand, archery tutor, carnival performer, roustabout, butcher shop worker

CITIZENSHIP: USA with a criminal record, pardoned

PLACE OF BIRTH: Waverly, Iowa

KNOWN RELATIVES: Harold & Edith Barton (parents), Charles Bernard "Barney" Barton (brother), Barbara Morse "Bobbi" Barton (Mockingbird, wife), Brett & Mack Barton (ancestors); all deceased

GROUP AFFILIATION: Avengers; formerly Thunderbolts, SHIELD (unofficial), Chain Gang 421-011, Shadows, Great Lakes Avengers, Cross Technological Enterprises, Defenders, Carson Carnival of Traveling Wonders, Tiboldt Circus (a.k.a. Circus of Crime); former partner of Mockingbird, Two-Gun Kid, Black Widow, Trick Shot, Swordsman

EDUCATION: High school (unfinished)

FIRST APPEARANCE: (Hawkeye) Tales of Suspense #57 (1964); (Goliath) Avengers #63 (1969); (Ronin) New Avengers #27 (2007)

Art by Leinil Francis Yu with John Romita Jr. (inset)

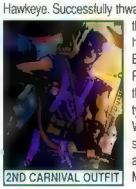
Art by Don Heck

Trick Shot taught Clint everything there was to know about archery, and also introduced him to the concept of "trick" arrows custom-designed for specific purposes; however, the two archers never grew truly close. Chisholm was a cruel sadist, but Clint stayed with him for the training, and because he had nowhere else to go. Meanwhile, Barney tentatively renewed his relationship with Clint and kept trying to convince his brother to leave the carnival and its criminal element behind. Clint stubbornly refused, and when Barney finally left the carnival to join the military, he left alone.

Once Clint had regained full mobility and become a formidable archer in his own right, Chisholm decided to have Clint earn his keep by moonlighting as Trick Shot's partner in mercenary work — beginning with a mob-sponsored hit targeting Swordsman's creditor Marko, who had been cheating his superiors. Telling Barton they were simply going to rob Marko, Trick Shot slipped into Marko's home and killed Marko and his wife, leaving the unsuspecting Clint outside as a lookout. Attacked by Marko's henchmen, Clint disarmed two of them, but a third gunman shot him, throwing off Clint's aim and resulting in a potentially fatal arrow wound for the third man. Horrified at having hurt someone, Clint was even more shocked upon recognizing the third gunman as his brother Barney. When Trick Shot ordered Clint to leave his brother behind, Clint refused to flee without seeking medical attention for Barney. The two archers fought and Trick Shot easily won, but he spared Clint's life, saying he would return someday to destroy Clint once he had grown into a foe worth killing.

Disappointed in his brother and ashamed of himself, Clint got Barney safely to the hospital and left shortly thereafter, unable to face his sibling. Unbeknownst to Clint, however, Barney had become an undercover FBI agent, and entering Marko's organization was his first field assignment. Upon his recovery, Barney continued to infiltrate organized crime, rising through the ranks to become a notorious gang boss. Clint, meanwhile, returned to the carnival circuit, gradually becoming a star attraction under his stage name Hawkeye and adopting a purple and blue costume similar to Trick Shot's old stage garb. As time passed, however, Clint became bored, desiring bigger challenges and greater fame than carnival performing could provide. He also suffered yet another disillusioning setback while working with the Tiboldt Circus (later known as the Circus of Crime), discovering that its Ringmaster was a criminal and that his accomplice was Clint's own girlfriend, Eden the tattooed lady. Clint turned them in to the police and left the Tiboldt outfit, working for Carson and other carnivals, but show life seemed increasingly empty for him. His few friends were fellow performers such as cyclist Dillon Zarro, who secretly resented Clint's superior skill and showmanship.

Back in his old buckskin suit, Hawkeye was performing in a Coney Island sideshow when he saw the armored superhero Iron Man (Tony Stark) saving patrons from a runaway carnival ride. Impressed and envious, Clint donned a new purple and blue costume with a small arsenal of specially gimmicked "trick" arrows and set out to fight crime as Hawkeye. Successfully thwarting a jewel robbery, he was mistaken for a thief by the police and fled. While escaping, he was rescued from police pursuit by the Black Widow (Natasha Romanoff), a beautiful Russian spy then devoted to sabotaging the scientific and industrial work of genius tycoon Tony Stark. Smitten with the Black Widow, Hawkeye repeatedly fought Stark's supposed bodyguard Iron Man on her behalf, and once clashed with novice hero Spider-Man while trying to rob Stark's business rival Simon Williams. Sensing a kindred spirit of sorts in Hawkeye, the often-misunderstood Spider-Man urged the misguided archer to abandon crime.

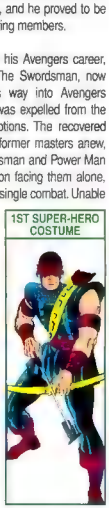


Art by Joe Bennett

Trying to revive his abortive crime-fighting career, Hawkeye rescued butler Edwin Jarvis and his mother from muggers in the Bronx. Grateful, Jarvis bought Hawkeye dinner and encouraged the archer to aspire to greater things than his fugitive vigilante lifestyle. Meanwhile, the manipulative Black Widow had gradually fallen in love with the dashing Hawkeye despite herself and tried to desert her Russian masters, who nearly killed her in retaliation. Heartbroken, Hawkeye got the wounded Natasha to a hospital and went back into hiding. Deprived of the financial and technological backing of Natasha's former employers, Clint maintained his archery arsenal by robbing criminals, using the funds to buy supplies and paying criminal inventor the Tinkerer to craft some of his more specialized high-tech shafts. Tracking Hawkeye down, Jarvis finally convinced him to abandon life on the run and helped Barton seek a new career with the butler's employers: the Avengers, the world's leading superhero team.

Secretly aided by Jarvis, Hawkeye staged a "break-in" at Avengers Mansion where he offered his services to the Avengers and showed off his skills, partly by freeing a bound-and-gagged Jarvis with a volley of arrows. The Avengers, including Hawkeye's old foe Iron Man, were convinced of Barton's sincerity and impressed by his abilities. Deciding to take a chance on him, they inducted Hawkeye into their ranks as the group's second recruit, filling one of several vacancies that were opening up as Iron Man and the other Avengers founders prepared to take a leave of absence. The other openings were filled by mutant twin siblings Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch, also former outlaws, while veteran member Captain America (Steve Rogers) stayed on as team leader. The unlikely foursome, nicknamed "Cap's Kooky Quartet" by the media, made for a volatile mix: Hawkeye and the other new recruits often questioned Cap's authority, but Clint soon developed respect for Cap's abilities and character. The two men became close friends, and Hawkeye became one of Captain America's most loyal supporters. Hawkeye also befriended his other early teammates, notably the Scarlet Witch, and he proved to be one of the group's most valuable and longest-serving members.

Hawkeye's past sometimes came back to haunt his Avengers career, but he usually emerged stronger as a result. The Swordsman, now an infamous criminal mercenary, swindled his way into Avengers membership as an agent of the Mandarin and was expelled from the group when the Avengers uncovered his deceptions. The recovered Black Widow was brainwashed into serving her former masters anew, attacking the Avengers and employing the Swordsman and Power Man (Erik Josten) as accomplices. Hawkeye insisted on facing them alone, subduing Josten and defeating the Swordsman in single combat. Unable to bring herself to harm Hawkeye, Black Widow shook off her brainwashing. The lovers resumed their romance, and Black Widow became a recurring ally to the Avengers; however, Natasha's new work with the elite intelligence agency SHIELD came between the couple over time, and they began to drift apart.



Art by Don Heck

Feeling insecure since he lacked the superhuman power and genius intelligence of various fellow Avengers, Clint gave up archery and used teammate Hank Pym's growth serum to become the new Goliath, a costumed identity formerly used by Pym himself. Barton continued to serve effectively with the Avengers as the giant-sized Goliath, but he gradually became frustrated with the limitations of Pym's serum; he also realized that he was no more effective as Goliath than he

Art by Wil Rosado

had been as Hawkeye, since his archery skills had often proven as valuable as any super-power. In fact, he used archery to win several victories as Goliath, including his single-handed defeat of the Skrulls who had tried to annihilate Earth during the Kree-Skrull War. Having already decided to abandon his Goliath guise, Barton formally resumed his Hawkeye identity after that triumph. Though he briefly resumed his Goliath guise several times in the ensuing years, he generally preferred to operate as Hawkeye, and eventually lost his physical tolerance for size-changing during a conflict with the alien Kosmosians.

During his Goliath phase, Clint was unexpectedly reunited with his brother Barney, who sacrificed his life to save the Avengers from criminal mastermind Egghead. Clint avenged him by bringing Egghead to justice, and soon learned about his brother's FBI career from Barney's partner Allan Scofield. Later, Clint suffered another personal loss when the Black Widow abruptly ended their on-and-off romance. By the time Clint resumed his Hawkeye identity, he had set his romantic sights on the Scarlet Witch; however, she firmly rejected him, having already fallen in love with their android teammate Vision. Bitter over his romantic setbacks and feeling unappreciated by the Avengers, Hawkeye impulsively left the group to work as an archery tutor for eccentric billionaire Imus Champion, but soon teamed with the Avengers to defeat Champion when he turned out to be a dangerous criminal. Despite this victorious reunion, Hawkeye formally quit the Avengers for the first time in hopes of making a name for himself as a solo hero.

Barton briefly tried to renew his relationship with the Black Widow, but this brought him into heated conflict with her then-current lover and partner, the adventurer Daredevil. When the Avengers recruited Black Widow and Daredevil to aid them in a case shortly thereafter, Hawkeye felt further estranged from his former teammates. After helping the Hulk destroy the rampaging monster Zzzax, Hawkeye joined the Hulk and other heroes in the informal Defenders super-team — partly out of curiosity, partly out of a desire to outperform the Avengers, and partly out of attraction to Defenders member Valkyrie. Barton fought several foes alongside the Defenders, and even battled the Avengers when Dormammu and Loki briefly tricked the two teams into fighting; this clash also briefly reunited Barton with the Swordsman, who had reformed and rejoined the Avengers. Realizing he still wasn't making a solo name for himself, Hawkeye quit the Defenders. He subsequently teamed with Spider-Man to defeat the rogue computer Quasimodo, and briefly masqueraded as the Golden Archer as part of a successful ploy to restore a demoralized Captain America's fighting spirit.

Art by Steve Epting

Rejoining the Avengers to help them defeat the time-spanning warlord Kang during the Celestial Madonna affair, Hawkeye witnessed the Swordsman's heroic death in action during that conflict. Barton later left on a time travel quest seeking fellow Avenger the Black Knight, but a chance encounter with Kang en route stranded Hawkeye in the year 1873, where he befriended several of his boyhood heroes: legendary Old West adventurers Kid Colt, Phantom Rider, Rawhide Kid, Ringo Kid and the Two-Gun Kid. Soon joined by the Avengers, Hawkeye helped the cowboys defeat Kang and returned to his own time, accompanied by the Two-Gun Kid, who wished to explore the future. Clint volunteered to serve as Two-Gun's personal guide to the modern world, and the two friends took an indefinite leave of absence from the Avengers to roam the American southwest in search of adventure, working at the Cheery-O's Dude Ranch in their civilian identities. As Hawkeye and Two-Gun, they defeated the mind-controlling Purple Man, thwarted the alien warlord Kaa with the aid of the Champions, and teamed with Ghost Rider (Johnny Blaze) to foil an attempt on Hawkeye's life by the Manticore.

In time, the duo grew restless and returned to the Avengers, though a homesick and somewhat overwhelmed Two-Gun soon went back to his native time period. After Hawkeye mistakenly attacked the Avengers' new National Security Council liaison, the often-adversarial Henry Peter Gyrich, Agent Gyrich demanded changes to the team's operations and membership — including Hawkeye's removal from the active roster. Demoted to reserve Avengers status, Hawkeye found a new occupation as security chief at scientific R&D firm Cross Technological Enterprises (CTE). Enjoying this high-paying managerial position, Hawkeye protected CTE from threats such as Deathbird and Mister Fear while befriending CTE technician Jorge Latham and dating CTE publicist Shiela Danning. He even rejoined the active Avengers roster, dividing his time between heroics and CTE. At the same time, he was happily reunited with Carson Carnival's current owner Marcy Carson, teaming with Ant-Man (Scott Lang) to save the carnival from Taskmaster.

When the vigilante el Aguila sabotaged an unethical CTE weapons project, Hawkeye assumed this was an isolated incident until the freelance spy Mockingbird (Bobbi Morse) tipped Barton off to massive corruption within the company. When Hawkeye investigated, CTE tried to kill them both, and Danning scornfully revealed that the company had paid her to seduce Clint as a distraction. Crushed by the simultaneous loss of his romance and his job, Hawkeye quickly bounced back and teamed with Mockingbird to fight back, battling their way through mercenaries Silencer, Bombshell and Oddball to bring down CTE and its secret leader, the high-tech subversive Crossfire. Strongly attracted to each other and realizing what a great team they made, the victorious Hawkeye and Mockingbird decided to make their partnership permanent, eloping on the spur of the moment.

Not long afterward, Hawkeye was appointed chairman of the Avengers' new western-based roster in California. As chairman, Hawkeye supervised the preparation of new western headquarters Avengers Compound; they bought the property from retired actress Moira Brandon, who became an honorary Avenger after she helped Hawkeye and Mockingbird recapture an escaped Crossfire. Barton proved to be a highly effective chairman, and his western roster's recruits included Mockingbird, Tigra, Wonder Man, an alternate Iron Man (Jim Rhodes), the original Iron Man (Tony Stark), Thing, Firebird, Doctor Pym, Moon Knight, Wasp, Vision, Scarlet Witch & Mantis. The vigilante Shroud declined an offer of membership from Hawkeye, but became a recurring ally to the group. Also active as a solo adventurer, Hawkeye fought various foes alongside allies such as Silver Sable, Sandman, le Peregrine, Black Crow and reporter Gayle Rogers. Most notably, Trick Shot finally challenged Hawkeye to a death duel, secretly hoping Barton would kill him since he was dying of cancer and wanted to go out facing a worthy opponent. Hawkeye refused to kill Trick Shot, but he offered to help his old enemy cope with his illness and the two men finally reconciled their differences.

When the alien computer entity Dominus exiled the western Avengers to the 19th century using a defective time machine that could only move backward through time, the Avengers teamed with Two-Gun Kid, Rawhide Kid and Phantom Rider to apprehend that era's Iron Mask gang. The Avengers next journeyed further back in time to ancient Egypt to seek the aid of that era's Rama-Tut — but the mad Phantom Rider (Lincoln Slade) abducted Mockingbird as they departed, stranding her in the Old West. He used Indian love potions to brainwash Mockingbird

into becoming his lover until she broke his control with Two-Gun's aid and hunted down Slade, who fell to his death in final battle with her. After Hawkeye and the other Avengers found ■ way back home and rescued Mockingbird en route, she concealed her role in Slade's demise since she feared the idealistic Hawkeye's reaction. When the truth came out months later — as related to Hawkeye by Slade's own vengeful ghost — Clint angrily condemned his wife's conduct, sparking an ideological debate within the Avengers regarding lethal force. Hurt by Clint's reaction, Mockingbird quit the group and left him. A heartsick Hawkeye threw himself into his Avengers work and occasional solo cases, notably his apprehension of the Bullet Biker, who turned out to be Clint's old friend Dillon Zarro.

Returning to spy work, Mockingbird was duped into helping the intelligence coalition Vigilance abduct and dismantle the Vision, further souring her relations with the Avengers in general and Hawkeye in particular. Given this development, and the increasingly take-charge attitude of senior members Doctor Pym and Wasp subtly undermining his leadership, Hawkeye became greatly frustrated. That frustration boiled over when the federal government appointed its abrasive operative USAgent to serve as the western Avengers' new in-house supervisor. Angrily quitting the team, Hawkeye began spending more time with Mockingbird, and the troubled couple mentored the Midwestern novice adventurers known as the Great Lakes Avengers while serving ■ on-call reservists with the official Avengers. During this period, ■ vengeful Crossfire placed a rich bounty on Hawkeye's arm which attracted ■ small army of bloodthirsty super-mercenaries, but Barton defeated Crossfire and company with the aid of Mockingbird and Trick Shot, whose cancer had gone into remission.

Hawkeye eventually rejoined the western Avengers' active roster, where he feuded frequently with teammate USAgent. Clint also flirted with new recruit Spider-Woman (Julia Carpenter), but when the killer robot Ultron kidnapped Mockingbird to use her mind as the programming template for his own robotic bride Alkhema, Barton led the Avengers' successful rescue of Mockingbird and rediscovered how much he loved her. The couple finally fully reconciled their marital differences, Mockingbird rejoined the team, and Clint served as chairman for ■ time before stepping down to concentrate on his marriage. Mockingbird, meanwhile, considered retiring from adventure altogether since she and Hawkeye had begun to talk of starting a family together. Their plans ended tragically when the Avengers were drawn into a clash between the arch-demons Satannish and Mephisto, who fatally blasted Mockingbird while she was helping Hawkeye and the Scarlet Witch get to safety.

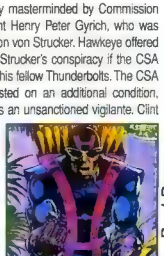
Devastated, Hawkeye left the Avengers to live as a wilderness hermit, but trouble kept finding him. He crippled the Viper's subversive Secret Empire with help from former Avengers teammate War Machine (Jim Rhodes); inventor Mack Mendelson, who helped Hawkeye update and restock his equipment; Trick Shot, who turned against his employer Viper to save Barton; and genetically engineered dog-being Rover. ■ failed Empire experiment who served as a sort of sidekick to Hawkeye for a time. Parting company with Rover, the troubled Barton developed friendships with Rhodes and old sparring partner USAgent, who had come to respect Barton and tried to recruit him into Force Works, ■ Stark-sponsored team which had replaced the now-disbanded western Avengers roster. For a time, Hawkeye mentored the U.S. government-sponsored revolutionaries known as the Shadows in the country of San Revilla, but he turned on them and departed after realizing how unethical and dangerous they were.

During his long absence from the Avengers, Hawkeye nursed a grudge against Iron Man (Tony Stark) — partly due to Stark's occasional legal and ethical misconduct as Iron Man, but also due to more personal reasons such as Iron Man's absence during Mockingbird's death, and Stark's arrogant, controlling personality. Perhaps because of this tension, when an Immortus-controlled Stark turned on the Avengers during the elaborate conspiracy known as "The Crossing," he tried to frame Hawkeye for murders Stark himself had committed. In the end, Stark rebelled against Immortus and seemingly sacrificed his life to defeat the villain, and Hawkeye rejoined the active Avengers roster, where he helped guide a teenage version of Stark recruited from an alternate timeline. Clint also befriended mysterious new honorary member Masque, though she soon disappeared.

When Hawkeye and most of the other active Avengers seemingly died while saving humanity from malevolent psychic entity Onslaught, they were secretly displaced into ■ alternate world created by Franklin Richards, a planet later known as Counter-Earth, where they lived out alternate versions of their lives as that world's Avengers. Eventually returning to their own world, the Avengers regrouped and Hawkeye again joined the active roster, personally recruiting new reservists Firestar & Justice; however, he felt increasingly restless in a non-leadership role after his time with the western Avengers, despite his respect for team leader Captain America. Barton soon quit the team to become the new leader of the Thunderbolts, a group of former super-villains seeking redemption as outlaw heroes.

Aided by sympathetic media coverage from Gayle Rogers — who was later killed by Thunderbolts enemy Scourge (Jack Monroe) — Hawkeye greatly improved the Thunderbolts' public image, and his leadership quickly made them a much more skillful and effective fighting unit. He also became something of an inspirational figure for the team, serving as an example to which they could aspire. He befriended multiple Thunderbolts, notably Songbird, and even shared a risky romance with oft-unscrupulous teammate Moonstone, but he was temporarily estranged from the team when they learned that his work with them had never been government-sanctioned as he originally claimed.

Shortly thereafter, Hawkeye and the Thunderbolts helped foil a massive anti-superhuman conspiracy seemingly masterminded by Commission on Superhuman Activities (CSA) agent Henry Peter Gyrich, who was actually a mind-controlled pawn of Baron von Strucker. Hawkeye offered to keep quiet about the CSA's role in Strucker's conspiracy if the CSA would arrange full criminal pardons for his fellow Thunderbolts. The CSA agreed, though ■ spiteful Gyrich insisted on an additional condition, that Hawkeye go to jail for operating as an unsanctioned vigilante. Clint accepted the terms and went to prison while the rest of the Thunderbolts went free. Ironically, most of them seemingly died saving the world from Graviton months later, but they actually survived on Counter-Earth.



Art by Paul Ryan

Shortly after his incarceration at Seagate Prison, Barton was secretly recruited by SHIELD officer "Dum-Dum" Dugan for an unofficial mission: to seek out an ultimate weapon developed by the late criminal tycoon Justin Hammer. Over the course of this mission, Clint escaped custody as part of a prison chain gang, later teaming with Songbird and a motley band of super-criminal allies to form a new group of Thunderbolts who neutralized Hammer's weapon and defeated the Crimson Cowl's Masters of Evil. After the Cowl's defeat, Hawkeye and Songbird resisted SHIELD's efforts to take their new teammates into custody, despite the risk of losing their own SHIELD-sponsored pardons. Before the matter could be settled, the new Thunderbolts teamed with the V Battalion, Silver Sable, and the original Thunderbolts to save the world from an all-consuming void emanating from the V Battalion's flagship, the Vanguard. When the two Thunderbolts factions assembled to discuss their collective future afterward, Hawkeye decided to leave the group, convinced he was no longer needed and confident that Songbird and the other members he

Art by Scott Kolins

trained would be able to keep the group both ethical and effective.

Rejoining the Avengers, Hawkeye spent his off hours touring America's seedier bars and eateries in search of cold beer, hot chili, and fresh trouble. During one of these trips, he romanced librarian Maryanne Sherbrook. He also helped his old girlfriend Eden make a fresh start after she got out of prison, and he shared a brief love affair with Avengers veteran Wasp, much to the shock and dismay of her longtime on-and-off lover Hank Pym. Meanwhile, the Scarlet Witch went criminally insane and turned against the Avengers, her rampage seemingly killing Vision, Jack of Hearts, Ant-Man and Hawkeye, who was blown up while trying to save his teammates from a Witch-conjured Kree army. She later resurrected Clint when she transformed the world into her "House of M" reality, a mutant-dominated altered reality in which Hawkeye was part of the underground resistance against the oppressive regime of her father, Magneto. Though the Witch seemingly destroyed Hawkeye again when he turned on her, Clint was reborn again when she restored conventional reality.

Disillusioned, confused and overwhelmed after his cycle of death and rebirth, Barton discarded his Hawkeye costume and gear and kept a low profile, informing no one of his return. After consulting sorcerer Doctor Strange (who confirmed that Barton had been lastingly resurrected), Clint decided to seek out and confront the Scarlet Witch despite Strange advising against it. When Barton finally found her, she was living quietly in Transia as an amnesiac Wanda Maximoff, apparently unaware of her past life as the Scarlet Witch. Uncertain of what to do, Clint impulsively shared a brief romance with Wanda before deciding to leave well enough alone and departing.

Clint Barton returned to America just after the super hero civil war fought over the new federal Superhuman Registration Act (SHRA), which required all super heroes to register their identities with the government and submit to federal control. The pro-SHRA forces led by Iron Man (Tony Stark) ultimately prevailed after anti-SHRA resistance leader Captain America surrendered to prevent further violence, though Cap himself was apparently assassinated by agents of the Red Skull while in custody. Most of the anti-SHRA heroes gave up and registered with the SHRA after Cap's surrender, accepting an offer of general amnesty — but a handful of radicals continued to resist the pro-SHRA regime, including an outlaw Avengers team led by Luke Cage. This faction is also allied with some of the teenage Young Avengers, including Kate Bishop, who had assumed Hawkeye's identity as a tribute to the supposedly deceased Barton. Upon returning to New York, Clint secretly confronted Tony Stark, who tried to convince Barton to register with the SHRA and replace the late Steve Rogers as the new Captain America; however, while trying out Cap's costume and shield, Clint met the new Hawkeye and her teammate Patriot (Eli Bradley), helping them escape when Iron Man tried to arrest them. Feeling it was wrong for himself or anyone else to usurp Cap's identity, Clint relinquished the shield and went back into hiding.

Determined to avenge Captain America and carry on Cap's work, Clint has joined Cage's Avengers and adopted a new identity as martial artist Ronin, inheriting a costume and alias formerly used by his new teammate Echo. Where this new life will lead Clint Barton remains to be seen.

HEIGHT: 6'3" **EYES:** Blue
WEIGHT: 230 lbs. **HAIR:** Blond

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: A natural athlete, Clint Barton is a highly experienced and formidable unarmed combatant, thanks largely to longtime combat training with Captain America. He also has extensive training as an acrobat and aerialist, skills he has often combined with his natural marksmanship — for instance, training himself to make accurate shots from virtually any angle, physical position or state of motion. Though trained primarily as an archer, Barton is a natural marksman with any thrown or fired weapon, and has a knack for using random objects as makeshift projectiles; in this respect, his abilities are similar to those of the assassin Bullseye, albeit less developed since Barton has concentrated exclusively on archery for much of his career. Barton has an instinctive genius for calculating the angles, velocity and likely impact of objects in motion, and routinely plans and executes complicated ricochet shots using assorted projectiles.

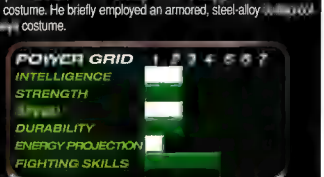
Barton is probably the world's most skillful and accurate archer, albeit currently out of practice. He trained with blades as a youth, notably knife throwing, and has also worked with darts, balls, bolas and boomerangs. He currently employs traditional Eastern martial arts weapons such as swords, throwing stars and nunchakus, and is rapidly becoming more proficient in their use. His phenomenal eyesight, reflexes, manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination make him a natural with most basic weaponry. He is a highly capable and charismatic team leader and a shrewd combat strategist, albeit sometimes reckless.

Barton is a talented weapons designer, particularly well-versed in variations on basic traditional missilery such as arrows, darts and hand-thrown projectiles. He has designed and crafted crescent darts, boomerangs, throwing irons, bolas and axes. Barton has also built and maintained much of his own custom-made archery arsenal over the years, including a wide array of mechanically gimmicked "trick" arrows, though some of his more high-tech arrows were designed by inventors such as the Tinkerer, Iron Man, Hank Pym, the Black Panther and Mack Gleason. Highly resourceful, Barton has often proven capable of constructing makeshift bow-and-arrow sets from random materials within moments.

An expert-level motorcycle rider, Barton was one of the most proficient and daring pilots of the Avengers' supersonic Quinjets, with a particular flair for spectacular and surprisingly survivable emergency crash landings. For years, Hawkeye also piloted various small, light one-man aircraft or "sky cycles" designed by Jorge [illegible] model) and Mack Mendelson (later model). More recently, Barton has employed a modified flying "Atomic Sleed" manufactured by the High Evolutionary's Knights of Wundagore, but later gave this vehicle to the Two-Gun Kid.

As Goliath, Barton could grow to gigantic sizes, gaining superhuman strength in the process. He seemed largely immune to the negative mental and physical side-effects that often plagued other enlarging size-changers, possibly due to Barton's natural athleticism and the powers of concentration that he cultivated via marksmanship. For a time, Barton was 80% deaf due to an injury, but his hearing was restored during his rebirth on Franklin Richards' Counter-Earth.

As Hawkeye, Barton wielded various custom-made bows and specially-gimmicked "trick" arrows, as well as various conventional arrows. His "trick" arrowheads were modular and could be attached to standard target-point arrows, and he usually carried multiple trick arrowheads in his costume. He briefly employed an armored, steel-alloy [illegible] costume.



VIPER

REAL NAME: Unrevealed
ALIASES: Madame Hydra, Madame Viper, White Princess, Leona Hiss, Mrs. Smith, Supreme Hydra; briefly believed herself to be Meriem Drew
IDENTITY: Secret
OCCUPATION: Terrorist, mercenary, ruler of Madripoor, subversive, smuggler
CITIZENSHIP: Possibly Hungary, wanted internationally for crimes, criminal record in the USA and Bulgaria
PLACE OF BIRTH: Hungary
KNOWN RELATIVES: Unidentified parents (deceased), unidentified sisters (presumably deceased), Logan/James Howlett (Wolverine, ex-husband)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Hellfire Club Inner Circle, Hydra (leader of unspecified faction; former leader of New York faction), leads own unidentified terrorist organization; formerly the Secret Empire, Fangs (leader), Save Our Society, Serpent Society (leader), two Serpent Squads (leader)
EDUCATION: Unrevealed
FIRST APPEARANCE: (Madame Hydra) Captain America #110 (1969); (Viper) Captain America #180 (1974)

HISTORY: As a young girl, the woman who would become the Viper fled Hungary, where her parents died and her sisters were defiled and discarded during a revolution. As she escaped across the border, an accident severely scarred and disfigured the right side of her face. During adolescence and young adulthood she struggled for survival, living solely by her own wits and succeeding best through crime. As the freelance mercenary Viper, she eventually became a pupil of the adventurer Seraph on the island nation Madripoor. Viper aided Seraph and Logan (later Wolverine) against the mutant Sabretooth who mortally wounded Seraph, though Viper got her allies home. The dying Seraph made Logan promise to fulfill one future wish of Viper's.

Reaching the highest levels of international criminal espionage by age thirty, Viper eventually joined the terrorist group Hydra. Achieving relative power under Hydra founder Baron Strucker, she set things up so that after he and his elite died (during the destruction of Hydra Island), she could easily eliminate her superiors. She thus became Supreme Hydra, a.k.a. Madame Hydra, leader of Hydra's New York operations. She began using green costuming and cosmetics, a color symbolic of her Hydra leadership. An early mission to purchase combat-trained youths from the monstrous slave-trader the Pig ended poorly, and Madame Hydra irately departed when young Remy LeBeau (later Gambit) blew up an aircraft during his escape.

Madame Hydra's mission to poison New York City's water supply was thwarted by Captain America and Rick Jones, who had just become the new Bucky. After Captain America foiled a Hydra assassination attempt, her agents captured Jones and prepared to ambush Cap. Jones escaped to warn Cap, who faked his death to render his true identity suspect. With Cap apparently dead, Madame Hydra drugged the Avengers attending his funeral, but Cap joined Bucky in defeating Hydra's forces; unbeknownst to all, the Space Phantom — shape-shifting pawn of the time-master Immortus — replaced Madame Hydra during this conflict, sending her to Limbo before "she" seemingly died in an explosion. With Madame Hydra apparently dead, the Space Phantom took another form and became the Supreme Hydra.

After what seemed like years in timeless Limbo, the former Madame Hydra returned to Earth and initially went into hiding, fearing Hydra would punish her failure. She ultimately decided she must destroy the world that so oppressed her or be destroyed herself. Soon after, the Atlantean warlord Krang obtained the mystic Serpent Crown and communed with the Elder God Set, who had Krang recruit Madame Hydra to help them conquer Earth. She began reassembling the Serpent Squad, a snake-inspired criminal group led by Viper (Jordan Dixon/Stryke). Slaying him, she usurped his costume and reclaimed the Viper identity. She also recruited Princess Python, who freed past Squad members Cobra (Klaus Voorhees) and the Eel (Leopold Stryke) from prison. Viper met with her new allies, telling the Eel she had adopted his brother Jordan's identity as a memorial after he died honorably, and paralyzing the Cobra with a venom dart when he challenged her authority. The Squad abducted Roxxon Oil president Hugh Jones despite the interference of Nomad (Steve Rogers, temporarily retired as Captain America), but when they tried to use Roxxon's Pacific Ocean drilling platform to raise the undersea continent of Lemuria as a new base, Nomad foiled their plans, and only Viper and Cobra escaped. Nomad tracked them to Seattle, where Viper tried to kill them all rather than face defeat, shooting Cobra when he turned on her; she escaped seeming death via a hidden tunnel.

As she fled, she was recruited by Japanese Red Army cadre leader Ishiro Tagara, who sought her skills as a terrorist, strategist and leader. Recovering in Japan, she briefly found peace, as well as her first love with Tagara. She soon conceived a master plan to crush the USA, and Tagara helped her form her own terrorist army and introduced her to the Silver Samurai, who became her enforcer and one of her few confidants. Plotting to crash the SHIELD helicarrier during a presidential address and

Art by David Finch with Rik Levins (inset)

thereby eliminate the entire US government, she first designed a hypno-beam which she used on SHIELD's underground New York headquarters, ordering its evacuation and looting the helicarrier's schematics. She next sought a teleportation mechanism; when the Samurai failed to obtain cavourite crystal to power it, she outsourced its design and twin rings were created with alternate power. The Samurai recovered one ring inadvertently sent to a New York actor, after which he and Viper teleported into the helicarrier and hypnotized its crew. The Black Widow (Natasha Romanoff) discovered Viper's plans and tried to warn SHIELD leader Nick Fury, but was captured and tortured. Narrowly escaping, the Widow joined forces with Spider-Man (Peter Parker), martial artist Shang-Chi and Fury himself to thwart the Viper's plot, defeating the Samurai and Viper's other agent, Boomerang, and freeing the crew from its hypnotized state; defeated by the Widow, Viper cheated death via her ring.

Retaking control of a Hydra faction, Viper confronted American-based Vietnamese crimelord Nguyen Ngoc Coy, but Coy's mutant nephew Tran Coy Manh mind-controlled Viper into killing her unidentified partner and serving in Coy's harem. Viper's mind was freed when Tran's sister, Xi'an/Shan (later Karma), absorbed Tran's mind into hers weeks later. Celtic sorceress Morgan Le Fay, an enemy of Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew), then mystically made Viper believe herself to be Meriem Drew, Spider-Woman's mother, and to have been a pawn of another Elder God, Chthon, for 50 years. While plotting to capture Michael Kramer (a man hosting but immune to a genocidal plague) and his daughter Pamela (who held the cure), Viper was foiled by Spider-Woman. Morgan manipulated Drew and Viper into an apparent conflict with Chthon, but Viper ultimately saved her "daughter" from becoming Chthon's slave before teleporting away. Viper's false memories broke down soon after.

Viper relocated to Hartsdale, Illinois, where she had her scientists create a more devastating form of Bubonic plague and infected hundreds of snakes to spread the disease across the world. Employing the mercenary Constrictor as muscle, she drugged and controlled Captain America, a new Nomad (Jack Monroe), and several investigating SHIELD agents; however, Constrictor rebelled upon learning of her nihilistic plot, enabling Cap and Nomad to destroy the infected snakes, though Viper escaped once again. Alongside the Silver Samurai, Viper coerced the Team America motorcycle stunt riders to steal a cavourite crystal, but when confronted by the New Mutants, she and Samurai teleported away and destroyed their base, nearly killing the heroes. Traveling to Japan, Viper aided Samurai's attempted takeover of Clan Yashida — which he saw as his by right of inheritance — but the X-Men defeated them.

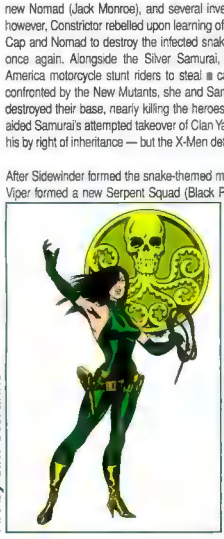
After Sidewinder formed the snake-themed mercenary Serpent Society, Viper formed a new Serpent Squad (Black Racer, Coachwhip, Fer-de-Lance & Puff Adder) whom she allowed to be publicly defeated and arrested. As planned, Sidewinder recruited the Squad into the Society, enabling Viper to locate their base, poison Sidewinder and other loyal members, and take over the Society. Using a serum obtained from another serpentine agent, the mutant Slither, Viper intended to poison the water supplies of several cities, transforming victims into serpentine mutates. Society member Diamondback (Rachel Leighton) contacted Captain America (then known simply as the Captain), who saved Viper's Society victims and defeated most of her allies. Still, Washington, DC's water supply was poisoned, leading to mass mutation — including the president and first lady. The Society's Cobra subdued Viper and turned her over to Cap in the vain hope of being allowed to go free, and Viper's serpentized victims eventually metabolized the drug, recovering completely. Imprisoned, Viper was soon freed by the subterranean lord Tyrannus (an agent of the Deviant Ghaur who sought to restore Set to Earth), and she became Leona Hiss, director of the SOS (Save Our Society) movement, offering cures to drug addiction while mutating their clients into serpentine humanoids with a Slither serum variant. After Moon Knight and the Punisher disrupted SOS's New York clinic, Tyrannus attempted to sacrifice Viper to summon a serpent god. Shaking off his control, Viper fed Tyrannus to the arriving demon before escaping.

Art by Mike Zeck

Reimprisoned, Viper was freed and recruited by the Red Skull (Johann Shmidt), who offered to finance any activities that undermined society. Becoming the Skull's lover, Viper plotted to blind all of America's television viewers. Working in secret with 10 million of the Skull's dollars, Viper began using look-alike "Pit-Vipers" to commit acts of anarchy across America in her name. At least one Pit-Viper went rogue, seeking an alliance with the Punisher and warning Nick Fury of the real Viper's plots, leading Viper to assassinate her. Discovering Viper's master plan, the Skull felt it would cripple the US too severely and interfere with his own plans, so he enlisted the mercenary Silver Sable to stop her; aided by Captain America, Sable captured Viper, then delivered her to the Skull's agent Iron Monger in hopes of locating the Skull himself. Though Iron Monger shattered her right knee and threatened further injury, Viper refused to surrender information and was rescued by her agents, the Fangs (Bludgeon, Heat-Ray, Razorblade, and Slither). Cap, Sable and her operatives followed the Fangs to Viper's base and disabled Viper's television transmitter. Since this literally crushing defeat, Viper appears to have softened, rarely pursuing such nihilistic goals. Often seen without her trademark scars, she has either had further cosmetic surgery or continued employing Pit-Vipers.

Viper later joined the Secret Empire to develop Biological Combat Units (Bio-Coms), animals mutated into savage and powerful semi-humanoid forms to be used as warriors. Working alongside Trickshot and Javelynn, Viper battled meddling hero Hawkeye (Clint Barton) and seemingly died when he blew up her combat exoskeleton, though she teleported away. Finally recognizing the connection between Tran Coy Manh and Karma, Viper joined with Spiral who helped her capture Karma's twin siblings, Coy Leong & Nga, and mutate them in her Body Shoppe. Viper led Karma — joined by allies the Beast and Cannonball — to the Body Shoppe and had Spiral begin to mutate Karma, but upon learning Tran's mind lived on in Karma, she destroyed Spiral's machines (because she wished vengeance on Tran), sparking a battle with Spiral; the heroes and the twins escaped as the Body Shoppe collapsed.

Recalling Logan's previous debt, Viper drugged and controlled several of his allies to locate him, then forced him to marry her. Following post-nuptial conflicts with ninja cult the Hand and Hydra, Viper earned the titles of ruling Prince and leading crimelord of Madripoor, and she retook command of a Hydra sect. She manipulated Wolverine for a time, and either Viper or one of her Pit-Vipers was captured by the mad biofanatic Arnim Zola, who planned to turn her over to an old acquaintance (presumably the Red Skull). After Wolverine won Madripoor's Bloodsport competition,



Art by Jim Steranko

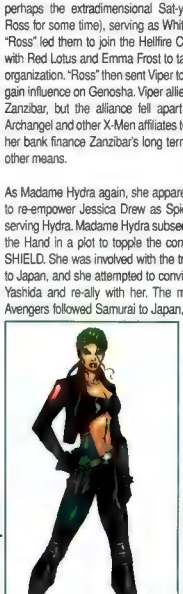
Art by Ande Park

Viper joined him against the mystic ninja Ogun, who possessed Viper. Wolverine stabbed her in the gut to force Ogun's flight, then took her for medical treatment only after she promised to grant him a divorce, for which she vowed to see him dead. Viper joined a group of X-Men against the extradimensional invader Khan; but she ambushed and nearly killed Storm to confront Khan herself, only to be easily dispatched by Khan. Following Khan's defeat, the X-Man Sage threatened Viper at knife-point to stay away from them.

As Madame Hydra she worked with mutated genius MODOK, who betrayed her, and the Avengers captured her in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government attempted to trade her to the US for the Black Widow, and when this failed, the plot's mastermind, Alexi Shostakov (the Widow's former husband), had Viper released. After attending the Serpent Society's failed attempt to auction off Captain America, Viper then allied with criminal madman Arcade, who lent her one of his Murderworlds to use against the X-Men, specifically intending to murder Sage. Recognizing Viper through her disguise, Wolverine used an image inducer to replace Sage and foil this plot, and the X-Men similarly thwarted Viper's attempt to kill the British Queen.

Hired to slay Courtney Ross, Viper instead joined forces with her (or perhaps the extradimensional Sat-yr9 who had been impersonating Ross for some time), serving as White Princess to her White Queen as "Ross" led them to join the Hellfire Club's Inner Circle. The two worked with Red Lotus and Emma Frost to take down a Hong Kong slave trade organization. "Ross" then sent Viper to seek power in Zanzibar in order to gain influence on Genosha. Viper allied with the Weaponeers to conquer Zanzibar, but the alliance fell apart and she eventually worked with Archangel and other X-Men affiliates to stop the Weaponeers. "Ross" had her bank finance Zanzibar's long term plans, attaining her goal through other means.

As Madame Hydra again, she apparently enlisted Hydra agent Connely to re-empower Jessica Drew as Spider-Woman in exchange for Drew serving Hydra. Madame Hydra subsequently allied her Hydra faction with the Hand in a plot to topple the corrupt leadership of both Hydra and SHIELD. She was involved with the transportation of the Silver Samurai to Japan, and she attempted to convince him to take leadership of Clan Yashida and re-ally with her. The meeting was broken up when the Avengers followed Samurai to Japan, during which time Spider-Woman tracked Madame Hydra to Fortress Yashida. Knowing the Avengers were close behind, Madame Hydra temporarily abandoned her plans, ordering Spider-Woman to blast her unconscious, and then to set her free when directed. Ejected out an Avengers quinjet hatch in mid-flight, Viper secretly flew to safety using an anti-gravity device and returned to Japan. Spider-Woman's true alliances were exposed to the Avengers as a result. During the events of the super hero "Civil War," Connely attempted to recruit Spider-Woman to overthrow Madame Hydra and take over Hydra itself, but Spider-Woman destroyed his base before escaping.



Art by Aaron Lopresti

HEIGHT: 5'9"
WEIGHT: 140 lbs.
EYES: Green
HAIR: Black (usually dyed [illegible])

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: A nihilist seeking to destroy society rather than conquer it, Viper embraces only oblivion, hoping to bring it to all humanity. She often meditates under the influence of opium, greeting her dreams of depravity and death. Though lacking super-powers, she has the strength, agility, stamina and coordination of an Olympic athlete, as well as exceptionally high pain tolerance; in addition, she does not fear death. She has been rigorously trained in various martial arts, is a skilled marksman with various firearms and energy weapons, and is highly experienced with knives. She is a talented actress and a master of disguise. She is a brilliantly cunning criminal strategist and combat tactician.

Viper has fang-capped her canine teeth, which are filled with neurotoxic synthetic Crotoxin — derived from the South American Rattlesnake (Crotalus durissus terrificus, a pit viper) to which she has developed immunity via controlled exposure — enabling her to incapacitate others within seconds after a bite. Viper's neurotransmitters, the high dose venom rapidly causes muscle paralysis, followed by fatal cardiac and respiratory failure; she sometimes uses less concentrated venom that causes only temporary paralysis. Victims can be saved with rapid anti-venom treatment. She uses throwing darts coated with this same poison, and has sometimes worn venom-based lipstick. Viper has also used the "Warrant of Death" — gas-coated paper activated by body heat releasing a potent anaconin gas on contact. Viper occasionally employs an opium derivative that renders others susceptible to her control.

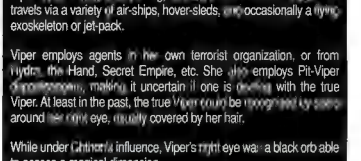
Viper previously used a chemical derived from Slither, which is extremely concentrated and can affect entire cities' water supplies. When consumed or injected, the chemical gives people serpentine characteristics, including scales, fangs and a forked tongue. Such "Serpent Men" are susceptible to her control but are also mentally feeble and are poikilothermic (affected by the ambient temperature), like a real snake. In cool environments, these Serpent Men become sluggish or even inert.

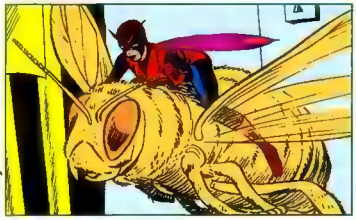
Via her association with Hydra and other criminal organizations, Viper has access to sophisticated firearm weaponry. She uses both handguns and energy pistols. She has used a force field that protected her from Spider-Woman's venom blast. She sometimes wears gloves with razor-sharp talons able to cut through steel. She frequently carries a bullwhip that she can use as a dangerous weapon. She has employed pet snakes. She typically wears Kevlar body armor.

Viper wears a teleportation ring, activated when twisted. Viper also travels via a variety of air-ships, hover-sleds, and occasionally a flying exoskeleton or jet-pack.

Viper employs agents in her own terrorist organization, or from Hydra, the Hand, Secret Empire, etc. She also employs Pit-Viper impersonators, making it uncertain if one is dealing with the true Viper. At least in the past, the true Viper could be recognized by scars around her right eye, usually covered by her hair.

While under Chthon's influence, Viper's right eye was a black orb able to access a magical dimension.





Art by Bob Powell

(David Cannon), later known as Whirlwind, who developed a sinister romantic obsession with the Wasp.

Pym and the Wasp also battled many villains alongside the Avengers, including corrupt nobleman Count Nefaria, whose henchmen gave Van Dyne a nearly fatal gunshot wound. Surgical specialist Dr. Hjarmal Svenson saved her life, but the incident left both Pym and Van Dyne badly shaken. Pym had already been nursing serious doubts about their adventuring career, and Van Dyne's near-death experience had forced her to realize the risks of her new life for the first time. The couple stepped down from active Avengers duty, and soon retired from crime-fighting altogether.

Bored and restless in retirement, Jan was happy when conflicts with Attuma and the Collector drew her and Pym back into the Avengers. Trying to make a fresh start, the uneasy Pym adopted a new costumed guise as Goliath while battling serious health problems associated with his size-changing powers. Despite his difficulties, he and the Wasp became mainstays of the Avengers, including a period during which they and new recruit Hawkeye (Clint Barton) were the team's only consistently active members. While Pym quietly struggled, Jan relished her adventures with the Avengers and reveled in her newfound control of the multi-million Van Dyne fortune, which she had inherited in full upon her 23rd birthday. Her new wealth further increased Pym's feelings of insecurity, and his emotional problems only worsened after he created the robot Ultron, which went rogue and became one of the Avengers' deadliest enemies. Pym, Wasp and their teammates also failed repeatedly to apprehend their old foe Whirlwind, who was secretly hiding in plain sight as Jan's chauffeur, "Charles Matthews."

Pym's feelings of guilt and shame over Ultron, his long-term sense of inadequacy, and the pressure of serving as Avengers leader all left him in a very fragile emotional state, made worse by his troubled romance with Van Dyne. She wanted and expected him to propose marriage, but he felt more unworthy of her than ever. Smashing his lab equipment in a moment of frustration, Pym accidentally exposed himself to mind-altering chemicals and suffered a major mental breakdown (his second), deluding himself into thinking he was ■ different person known as Yellowjacket — ■ more daring, assertive personality, and a role more compatible with the Wasp.

In his new costumed identity as Yellowjacket, Pym claimed he had "killed" Goliath, and that he was taking Pym's place — both in the Avengers and in Jan's affections. Wasp and the other Avengers immediately saw through Yellowjacket's disguise, but they played along with him at the urging of SHIELD psych expert Special Agent Carver, who warned that challenging Pym's delusion might trigger a full-blown psychotic break. Jan even went so far as to stage her own wedding to the delusional Yellowjacket, though Pym regained his memory shortly after the ceremony when he saved Wasp from the Circus of Crime using his Goliath powers. The couple took ■ leave of absence from the Avengers while Hank recovered, calling it a honeymoon and making their marriage official; however, Pym refused to seek psychiatric treatment, stubbornly insisting that he was cured, and he even opted to keep the Yellowjacket guise as his long-term costumed identity.

Despite his outward confidence, Pym privately continued to feel inadequate in comparison to Wasp and his fellow Avengers. He also felt like a personal and professional failure since his scientific career had stalled and he was living off the wealth of Van Dyne, who had started a successful career of her own as ■ fashion designer. After the couple both survived near-fatal health crises and finally exposed "Charles" as the Whirlwind, Pym began to scale back his involvement in the Avengers, opting for reserve status while Jan served with the active roster. Perhaps trying to compensate for his less active role in their adventuring, Pym developed ■ serum that enhanced Jan's powers by harnessing the energy of her size-changing, using that energy to increase her physical strength and to power her bioelectric sting. By this time, Jan had begun consulting psychiatrist Michael Reilly for advice on how best to handle the troubled Hank, acting as supportive and affectionate with Pym as possible, but her efforts were soon undone. Attacked and brainwashed by Ultron, Pym suffered a third mental breakdown, assaulting Wasp and the other Avengers.

Pym soon regained his sanity, but his underlying mental problems remained, and he gradually became ill-tempered and verbally abusive with Jan. When he rejoined the active Avengers roster, he was so eager to prove himself that he acted recklessly during ■ mission and was charged with misconduct. Descending into his fourth and worst mental breakdown, Pym plotted to redeem himself by building a robot designed to attack the Avengers at his disciplinary hearing, ■ robot that Pym himself would be able to defeat using a secret cut-off switch. When Wasp discovered Pym's plan, he angrily forbade her to interfere and even physically struck her. Pym's subsequent misconduct court martial went badly, especially after his teammates spotted Van Dyne's black eye and realized how she got it. Seeing the group turn against him, Pym activated his robot, but it worked too well and seriously threatened most of the Avengers, including Yellowjacket himself. Pym was almost killed before Wasp deactivated his robot using the secret cut-off switch.

Pym left the Avengers in disgrace, and Jan swiftly divorced him — but to everyone's surprise, she emerged from the crisis stronger than ever. She had long regarded Pym as a sort of substitute father figure as well as her lover, and for years Pym had been the primary focus of her life. With Pym gone, Van Dyne redefined herself as an independent adult for the first time. She threw herself into her fashion designs and her other business interests with renewed vigor, enjoying even greater success than before. She also strengthened her commitment to the Avengers, successfully running for chairwoman and proving to be one of the most effective and capable leaders in the team's history. Wasp helped recruit new members such as Starfox, Captain Marvel (Monica Rambeau) and She-Hulk, who became one of Jan's closest friends. Van Dyne also made peace with ex-husband Pym and came to regard him as a friend after he regained his mental stability. Meanwhile, Wasp found new loves in her life. She shared a brief, intense romance with wealthy playboy Tony Stark, but ended it after Stark confessed he was her longtime teammate Iron Man. She later began dating the dashing mercenary adventurer Paladin, a longer-lasting and more light-hearted relationship.

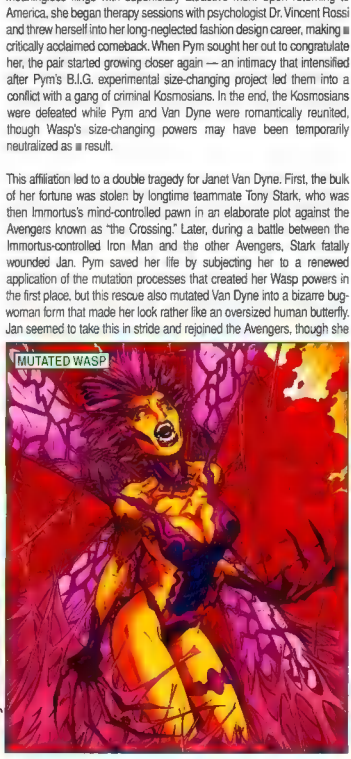
Art by Bob Powell

Van Dyne's stint ■ Avengers leader, while successful, was also highly stressful. Killed and resurrected twice during the cosmic Beyonder's original Secret Wars,

the still-recovering Wasp was briefly manipulated into letting Vision take over the team as chairman before she reclaimed the post. She later led the group through one of the most traumatic crises in its history, the occupation of Avengers Mansion by Baron (Helmut) Zemo's Masters of Evil. Shortly after the Masters' defeat, Jan decided she needed a vacation and stepped down as Avengers chair, taking an indefinite leave of absence; however, when the Avengers' new western roster was shorthanded, Wasp began assisting them. She also became friendlier with Pym, who had joined the western group as the plainclothes Doctor Pym after rebuilding his confidence and revamping his methods. Wasp soon became a fully active member of the team's western division, and she and Pym even briefly served as interim co-chairs of the western roster.

Jan and Hank toyed with renewing their romance during their western Avengers stint, but they eventually decided to part as friends. Pym returned to pure research, while Van Dyne left the team to travel and pursue her new sideline as a screenwriter, shopping around a script for an Avengers movie. Neither lover had fully let go of the other, though; trying to fill the void, Jan went through a globe-trotting series of meaningless flings with superficially attractive men. Upon returning to America, she began therapy sessions with psychologist Dr. Vincent Rossi and threw herself into her long-neglected fashion design career, making a critically acclaimed comeback. When Pym sought her out to congratulate her, the pair started growing closer again — an intimacy that intensified after Pym's B.I.G. experimental size-changing project led them into a conflict with a gang of criminal Kosmosians. In the end, the Kosmosians were defeated while Pym and Van Dyne were romantically reunited, though Wasp's size-changing powers may have been temporarily neutralized as a result.

This affiliation led to a double tragedy for Janet Van Dyne. First, the bulk of her fortune was stolen by longtime teammate Tony Stark, who was then Immortus's mind-controlled pawn in an elaborate plot against the Avengers known as "the Crossing." Later, during a battle between the Immortus-controlled Iron Man and the other Avengers, Stark fatally wounded Jan. Pym saved her life by subjecting her to a renewed application of the mutation processes that created her Wasp powers in the first place, but this rescue also mutated Van Dyne into a bizarre bug-woman form that made her look rather like an oversized human butterfly. Jan seemed to take this in stride and rejoined the Avengers, though she



Art by Ian Churchill

was estranged from Pym when she learned that the overanxious Giant-Man had planted a monitoring device on her without her knowledge in order to better analyze her new physical state. Still, this latest breakup did not stop the couple from declaring their love for each other while they and most of the other Avengers seemingly died battling the psionic monster Onslaught.

With most of the active Avengers seemingly dead, the remaining members disbanded the team. Meanwhile, Pym, Wasp and the other supposedly dead Avengers had been hurled into an alternate world created by Franklin Richards, a world later known as Counter-Earth. The lost Avengers lived out alternate versions of their past lives in this new world, including another incarnation of the Pym-Wasp romance. By the time the Avengers finally returned to their own Earth, Franklin's power had instinctively "fixed" any Avengers who needed it, such as returning Wasp to her human form and restoring her standard powers.

Upon returning, Pym, Wasp and the other Avengers founders promptly reassembled the team. Like Pym, however, Wasp initially opted for reserve membership so she could concentrate on rebuilding her depleted fortune and renewing her romance with Pym. She soon succeeded in both respects (presumably with some financial help from a repentant Stark on the business front), though Pym's emotional problems endured and made their romance uneasy. Despite this, they continued to participate in Avengers adventures, notably the cosmic conflict known as the Destiny War, during which Wasp led a squad of Avengers from assorted timelines in a successful effort to save humanity from the Time Keepers.

When the Avengers were suffering bad publicity during the Triune Understanding's smear campaign against the team, Wasp accepted an invitation to resume her old post as team leader. She quickly repaired the group's image and assembled a new and effective roster, though there were problems — notably Pym, who had rejoined as Goliath. During the Avengers' battle with the sorcerer Kulan Gath, one of Gath's spells accidentally split Pym into two separate beings: a Goliath embodying Pym's intellect and a Yellowjacket embodying his passions, representing all the wilder emotions Pym had repressed since his long-ago abuse of Van Dyne. After she discovered what was happening, Wasp helped Hank merge his two warring halves with the assistance of Triune Understanding founder Jonathan Tremont, and also helped Hank to accept himself as a whole person, a flawed but worthwhile individual. Determined to confront and master his inner demons for good, Pym resumed his Yellowjacket identity and continued to serve with the Avengers under co-chairs Wasp and Captain America.

Together, Wasp and Cap led a reorganization of the Avengers, rebuilding and refitting their headquarters and equipment, and launching an ongoing series of operations designed to better monitor and contain potential threats. Despite these expanded and improved operations, the group suffered one of its worst setbacks ever when they failed to prevent Kang from slaughtering the population of Washington, DC, after which the Avengers were forced to formally surrender to Kang on behalf of the world. In the end, though, the Wasp and Captain America led the Avengers and many other warriors in overthrowing Kang's rule and liberating the people of Earth.

After the war, the Wasp became more preoccupied with her personal development rather than team issues. While vacationing with Pym, she declined his proposal of remarriage but reaffirmed her commitment to their romance. Soon afterward, she began experimenting with new applications of her size-changing power, mimicking Pym's longtime ability to assume gigantic sizes. Given the often-negative mental and physical side-effects of such growth powers, this may have played a role in Jan's somewhat erratic behavior during that same period. She became

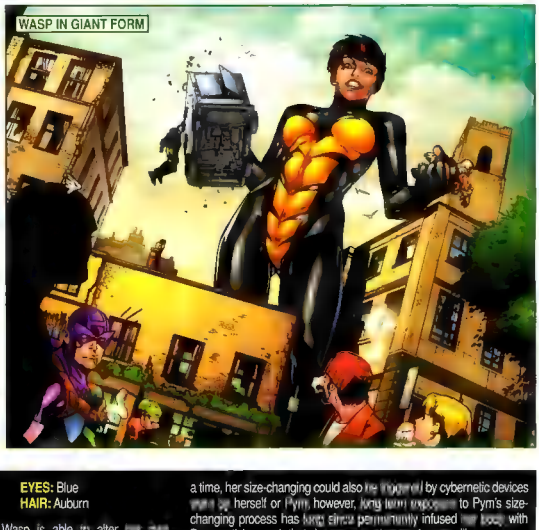
increasingly quarrelsome with Pym, suddenly preoccupied with his abusive past and personal shortcomings. At the same time, she shared a brief love affair with longtime teammate Hawkeye, leaving Pym shocked and crushed after he found them together.

When a criminally insane Scarlet Witch turned against the Avengers, Wasp was among the injured and Hawkeye was among the slain. Pym stayed by Wasp's bedside throughout her recovery, which convinced her to give their romance yet another chance. When the Avengers disbanded following the Scarlet Witch disaster, Wasp and Pym left together, briefly settling in Britain while Pym did some work at Oxford. Their latest attempt at reviving their romance failed, however, and they had already split up when they were among the super-beings sent to Battleworld by the alien Stranger as part of his latest experiment. Taking charge of the random band of heroes and misfits the Stranger had abducted, Wasp helped the group make their way back to Earth. She also firmly rejected new romantic overtures from Pym, having realized anew how unhealthy their on-and-off connection was, though Pym quickly found comfort in a new romance with Avengers reservist and fellow Battleworld escapee Firebird.

WASP USING ANTENNAE

tragedy, Wasp and Pym remained loyal to the pro-SHRA cause until the civil war ended with the surrender of Captain America. Since then, like many of her peers, Wasp has registered with the federal government's Initiative program, which oversees, regulates and coordinates the activities of America's super heroes, as managed by new SHIELD director Tony Stark. She was also recruited into a new Initiative-backed Avengers roster assembled by Stark and led by Ms. Marvel.

When the federal Superhuman Registration Act (SHRA) was passed following the Stamford disaster, a super hero civil war broke out between factions supporting and opposing the legislation. While Jan had vocally opposed similar legislation in the past, she and Pym were both among the Avengers members and associates who sided with the pro-SHRA faction, led by Tony Stark. As part of Stark's inner circle, they participated in several battles with the anti-SHRA forces led by Captain America, including a fight which cost the life of their longtime friend Goliath (Bill Foster), Pym's old research partner. Despite this


WASP IN GIANT FORM

Art by Olivier Coipel

HEIGHT: 5'4" (variable) **EYES:** Blue
WEIGHT: 110 lbs. (variable) **HAIR:** Auburn

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: The Wasp is able to alter her own physical size, though she primarily uses this power more for shrinking than for growing. Through concentration, she can reduce herself to as little as a half-inch in height ("wasp size") or restore herself to normal human size at will. She has also demonstrated the capacity to enlarge herself to gigantic sizes (up to fifty feet), but very seldom employs this ability. Her size-changing power stems from Pym Particles, exotic subatomic particles discovered by Henry Pym which originate in the other-dimensional alien world of Kosmos. When people or objects tap into Pym Particles, they change size by compressing with matching quantities of Pym Particles in the Kosmosian dimension. Shrinking temporarily shunts much of a size-changer's physical mass into the particle-suffused mists of Kosmos, and growing beyond normal size requires the temporary acquisition of extra mass from the Kosmosian realm. The Wasp's size-changing originally depended on repeated doses of Pym Particles to activate her powers; for instance, she initially wore cylinders of Pym Particle-derived gas on her belt, which would reduce or increase her size upon release. She later wore a cartridge belt filled with Pym Particle-derived, color-coded pills or capsules formulated to reduce or enlarge her form to specific pre-set sizes. For a time, her size-changing could also be triggered by cybernetic devices worn by herself or Pym, however, long term exposure to Pym's size-changing process has long since permanently infused her body with Pym particles, such that she can now change sizes at will.

Compared to other Pym-powered size-changers, the Wasp has experienced relatively few negative side-effects stemming from her size-changing powers, perhaps in part because she has concentrated almost exclusively on shrinking; Pym-derived growth powers have long been associated with greater health risks such as mental instability or dangerous physical strain, which probably explains why Van Dyne has mostly avoided giant sizes. In fact, during the one brief period when she frequently assumed gigantic sizes, her behavior was more emotional and erratic than usual. Perhaps suspecting this link herself, Van Dyne has not experimented with gigantic sizes again since then. Shrinking is almost effortless for her, as is resuming her normal size, though too many changes back and forth between sizes within a short span of time can be fatiguing. Growing to gigantic sizes is more of a physical and mental strain, and switching directly from giant size to insect size or vice versa has taxed her to the point of fainting on occasion. Her exceptionally strong will may partially explain her adapting well to the mental strain of size-changing. She probably also benefits from an additional mutation that Henry Pym induced years ago, which harnesses the energy of her

size-changing process and used it to enhance her strength, presumably easing the physical strain of size-changing.

Thanks to the aforementioned secondary mutation, Van Dyne actually grows stronger as she shrinks, augmenting the potency of the energy she receives as enhanced physical strength — for instance, when she is reduced to her one-foot height she has slightly superhuman strength and can easily bend a two-inch diameter steel bar nearly double. Even at her smallest half-inch size, she retains strength equal to or slightly greater than that of her normal-sized form. On the rare occasions when she assumes gigantic sizes, she seems able to grow taller and stronger than most Pym-powered size-changers with comparatively less physical strain — again, presumably aided by the secondary mutation which uses energy from the size-changing process to enhance her physical strength. During her "Giant-Woman" phase she could assume heights of forty or fifty feet with relative ease, and was able to lift at least 30 tons at her maximum stature.

Synthetic specialized cells implanted beneath her shoulder blades expand into functional, insect-like wings as she shrinks; when she returns to normal size, the wings disappear beneath a nearly undetectable layer of genetically engineered callous. She could initially manifest her wings only at their size, but the cells seeded along cells gradually multiplied over the years, enabling her to manifest her wings at larger sizes. She can now sprout wings at a height of 4'4" or smaller; however, she is slightly less maneuverable at larger sizes, tires more rapidly and makes an easier target, so she usually prefers to fly at sizes smaller than her maximum winged height. She is also far more practiced in the art of flying at tiny sizes, having learned to fly at larger sizes only in recent years. Her wings remain proportionately the same size relative to the rest of her body as she changes sizes, apart from their disappearance beneath her skin at heights above 4'4". At her maximum winged size, she can fly at speeds of up to 38 mph for up to an hour before tiring; it takes more energy to achieve top flight speed at smaller sizes, but her physical strength and endurance increase as she shrinks, so this more or less balances out. Her wings' efficiency is sometimes negatively affected by extremes of temperature or humidity. Able to maneuver in flight much like a real wasp, she can hover and dart forwards and backwards in addition to sustained forward flight. She has also trained herself to fly upside down if need be. Her reaction time using her wings is exceptional, sufficient to evade even rapid-processing targeting computers. Her wings are grafted to her spinal column and rib cage by a series of supporting rings that serve as artificially placed ligaments. Composed of inert unstable molecules, these rings smoothly expand and contract as needed.

Synthetic specialized cells implanted beneath the Wasp's temples originally expanded into functional, insect-like antennae as she shrank; when she returned to normal size, the antennae would disappear beneath an undetectable layer of genetically engineered callous. The Wasp's antennae enable her to communicate with and command insects such as ants, wasps and bees; they also enable two-way mental communications with cybernetic devices such as the various artificial antennae worn by Pym over the years. In addition, her antennae have sometimes proven hypersensitive to exotic stimuli, enabling her on rare occasions to detect an alien or malevolent presence in her vicinity. While her similar wing cells have multiplied over the years, her antennae cells soon atrophied; they never died out completely, but the antennae cells have been dormant for much of Van Dyne's career as the Wasp, no longer growing when she shrinks. After her natural antennae atrophied, she replaced them with various cybernetic devices worn as a helmet, cowl or collar. Like Pym, various cowls and helmets, these devices enabled her to communicate with and command insects, but she generally had less enthusiasm for this function than Pym and used her cybernetic accessories less frequently over time. The Wasp's antennae were later restored by a fresh infusion of Pym Particles from Pym himself, and she was again able to manifest her antennae as she shrank for some time thereafter; however, she has seldom manifested her antennae in recent times, suggesting that the antennae cells have probably become dormant again.

While the Wasp has generally used her antennae and cybernetic devices to command random swarms of wasps, bees and ants, she has also employed and trained specific insects as partners for brief periods. For instance, she briefly employed a trained bee as her personal steed, and later replaced the bee with a similarly short-lived sidekick, a trained wasp dubbed "Buzzsaw." While she has sometimes used bees, wasps and flying ants as steeds to avoid taxing her wings, she has done this much infrequently in recent years as her wings have grown stronger and her bond with the insect world has grown weaker. Unlike Pym, she has seldom formed long-term attachments to specific insects.

In her earliest adventures, the Wasp wielded a large stick-pin as a makeshift "sting" with which to jab her opponents. She soon replaced this with custom-mounted compressed air guns designed by Pym; triggered by a finger-push pull cord, these new stingers could fire one long continuous burst of compressed air or a series of shorter bursts. These air blasts struck with a concussive force of 75 pounds per square inch. She sometimes loaded her compressed air stingers with pellets or needles which she could fire with tremendous force. Later, Pym provided her with wrist-mounted stingers that fired bursts of electrical energy. He eventually modified these stingers so they could tap the energy of her body's size-changing process and convert it into blasts of bioelectricity, greatly enhancing her firepower. While making these modifications, Pym altered the Wasp's powers such that her size-changing increased her body's natural bioelectrical charge, enabling her to act as a more powerful battery for her stingers. This ability gradually increased over time, and she can now generate powerful blasts of bioelectrical energy without any mechanical aids — enabling her, for instance, to burst through solid concrete rapidly enough for her to fly through it without slowing down. She can even generate her "projective sting" blasts while she is full-sized, presumably through a bioelectric energy reserve built up during recent size-changing.

An athletic woman at above normal intelligence, the Wasp has trained extensively in unarmed combat with the Avengers most notably under the tutelage of Captain America. She was also trained in specialized size-changing combat by Hank Pym, learning to use her variable size to her advantage (for instance, enlarging from below to punch a larger opponent above her, exploiting the momentum of her size change and the element of surprise). She has long since grown accustomed to the potentially overwhelming sensation of being tiny within vastly larger surroundings. She is a gifted, experienced and charismatic team leader, a highly capable combat strategist and a keen student of public relations. A gifted fashion designer, she has designed costumes for fellow heroes and has designed and worn well over two hundred unique costumes of her own. All of her costumes and most of her civilian clothes and jewelry are treated with unstable molecules so that they change sizes along with her when she shrinks and grows.

When she was more drastically mutated during the "Crossing" crisis, Wasp became taller, orange-skinned and inhuman-looking, with large antennae, larger and more colorful wings, and elongated clawed fingers. She seemed unable to change sizes during this period, but was able to use her wings and antennae at full power. She was restored to her normal form during her rebirth on Franklin Richards' Counter-Earth.

*STRENGTH INCREASES AS SHE SHRINKS OR GROWS

HISTORY: The younger son of munitions manufacturer Sanford Williams, Simon was a bookish lad who loved math, chess and jazz and preferred reading to sport. His father demanded the best from both Simon and his brother Eric, becoming physically abusive if they achieved anything less than straight A's. Desperate for parental approval, young Simon excelled in the sciences but never satisfied his perfectionist father; the less academic Eric responded to Sanford's beatings by bullying Simon. Eric drifted into crime, but Simon resisted pressure to follow suit, instead taking over Williams Manufacturing around the age of 20 after their father died, renaming it Williams Innovations. Simon's inexperienced leadership landed the company in debt, partly due to rival firm Stark Industries constantly outdoing them on the R&D front. Simon pinned his hopes on developing a new missile targeting system for the US government, but when novice hero Spider-Man (Peter Parker) tried to stop the criminal Hawkeye (Clint Barton) from stealing the system designs, their battle destroyed the lab, pushing the company closer to bankruptcy. Simon turned to Eric, but his brother's intimidation tactics failed to garner contracts; in desperation, Simon embezzled money, hoping to invest it in Eric's Maggia ventures for a quick profit. Caught by the authorities, Simon admitted his guilt.

Before his sentencing, Simon's bail was paid by Asgardian sorceress Amora the Enchantress. Her ally, Nazi scientist Baron (Heinrich) Zemo, offered Simon superhuman powers and a chance for revenge in return for helping Zemo's Masters of Evil destroy the Avengers, who were funded by Simon's rival Tony Stark (secretly Avengers founder Iron Man). Simon accepted, but after Zemo's ionic ray treatments granted him superhuman strength and durability, Zemo revealed that the treatment would also kill Simon without weekly doses of an antidote. Believing Simon's loyalty thus ensured, the Masters lured the Avengers into battle and Simon came to the heroes' aid as Wonder Man. After the Masters fled, Simon asked to join the Avengers, who took him in and helped seek a cure for his terminal condition, just as Zemo had planned. Briefly snatched out of time to serve in Kang the Conqueror's Legion of the Unliving against a future incarnation of the Avengers, Simon was soon returned to his proper time by Immortus, with his departure unnoticed and his memories of the incident wiped. Touched by the Avengers' concern and respect for him, Simon nevertheless lured them into the Masters' ambush a few days later. When he realized Zemo would kill his captives rather than ransom them off as Simon had presumed, Simon switched sides, freeing the Avengers. The Masters fled, but Simon collapsed and seemingly died moments later, noting that he was happy to have done one noble thing in his life.

Simon had actually entered a deep hibernative state as his ionic energies triggered a body-wide transformation. Unaware of this and hoping to restore him someday, the Avenger Giant-Man (Henry Pym) hurriedly recorded Simon's brain patterns and stored his body. Unable to accept Simon's failings, Eric claimed responsibility for the embezzling and blamed the Avengers for Simon's death, targeting them as the costumed Grim Reaper. Intrigued by Simon's story, Reaper's robotic ally Ultron stole Simon's brain patterns and used them to form the artificial mind of his android pawn, the Vision, who soon joined the Avengers. Initially embracing the Vision as his resurrected brother, the Reaper stole Simon's inert body and offered to transfer the android's mind into it, but the Vision declined. Still seeking vengeance, Eric paid the voodoun Black Talon to revive Simon's body as a Zuvembie, delivered to Avengers Mansion and instructed to slay the Avengers. Simon instead collapsed, and the heroes soon apprehended the Black Talon, though they remained unaware of Eric's involvement. The team kept Simon under observation in their mansion, monitoring his stabilizing lifesigns, until his consciousness fully awoke when the Living Laser used the Serpent Crown to take over Simon's mind temporarily.

Simon remained with the Avengers while Vision's wife Scarlet Witch (Wanda Maximoff) tried to help him acclimatize, but the Vision himself proved hostile, his sense of identity shaken by the return of the man he had believed himself to be. Having likewise presumed the Vision was Simon, the Reaper captured the Avengers and put both men on trial, determined to identify his true brother and slay the imposter. The Vision admitted he had once hoped he was the true Simon Williams, but was now content to be his own, unique, person. Simon, meanwhile, revealed his newly glowing eyes, a visible sign of his now energy-permeated body. When the Vision hypothesized that Simon had stepped beyond humanity and that he and Simon were the true brothers, an enraged Eric decided

REAL NAME: Simon Williams
ALIASES: "Wundy," John Porter, Dethblo the Diabolical, Hal Canutt, Corporal Mitchell, Monster Man, Black Bart, Mr. Muscles
IDENTITY: Publicly known
OCCUPATION: Adventurer; formerly actor, stuntman, security troubleshooter, industrialist, inventor
CITIZENSHIP: USA with a criminal record, pardoned
PLACE OF BIRTH: Paterson, New Jersey
KNOWN RELATIVES: Sanford Williams (father, deceased), Martha Williams (mother), Eric Williams (Grim Reaper, brother), Thomas, William (nephews, apparently destroyed), extended family through in-laws
GROUP AFFILIATION: Avengers, Operation: Lightning Storm, the Initiative; formerly Legion of the Unliving, Force Works, Masters of Evil (unofficial)
EDUCATION: Advanced degree in electrical engineering
FIRST APPEARANCE: Avengers #9 (1964)

Art by Roberto De La Torre with Dan Heck (top inset)

Art by Jack Kirby

to kill them all, but the mutated Simon proved resistant to Eric's weapons and he easily subdued the Reaper. Wonder Man's next opponent, however, made Simon question his apparent invulnerability: discovering Ultron's attacks could hurt him, Simon was overwhelmed by a fear of dying again. He began freezing up in combat repeatedly, despite scientific studies indicating he was now a being of living energy and had not truly died the first time around. Soon after facing Ultron, Simon battled Power Man (Erik Josten), who had also been empowered by Zemo's ionic equipment, and then Count Nefaria, who copied and refined the process; both would become recurring opponents.

Growing somewhat closer to his new "brother" Vision, Simon found other friends amongst his new peers, such as Ms. Marvel (Carol Danvers), whose advice Simon sought in trying to work past his fears. He was also reunited with Hawkeye, now a long-reformed Avengers veteran. Wonder Man developed a strong friendship with the apelike Beast, whose extroverted personality complimented the more introspective Simon. When the Avengers and the Guardians of the Galaxy faced the cosmically powerful Korvac, who killed most of the heroes with ease, Wonder Man finally overcame his death phobia and attacked; though Simon, too, fell, his relentless onslaught gave the surviving heroes a vital chance to rally, and all the fallen heroes were later restored by their foe. Despite nearly dying a second time, and occasional brief relapses of fear when reminded of his own mortality, Simon was never again ruled by the terror of dying.

A cinema trip with the Beast inspired Simon to do something beyond living off his Avengers stipend, and he decided to become an actor. When the government ordered the Avengers to limit their team size to seven members, Simon moved out, though he was granted formal membership in the team's reserves and pardoned for his past crimes. He landed his first acting role as the lead in an off-Broadway play, City of Angst, by a producer who hoped having an Avenger in the cast would boost box office; however, Simon's complete lack of training saw the play close the same night it opened, leaving Simon a laughing stock.

The only acting job Simon could get was that of "Mr. Muscles" on cable's The Uncle Elmer Show, as the caveman-clad victim of Elmer's abusive jokes. He began assisting the Avengers more often, fighting the Taskmaster. Red Ronin (during which battle he earned a lifelong fan by rescuing teenager Cindy Knutz), and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. Joining the Avengers fulltime to replace the departing Falcon, Simon lost his acting job after accidentally humiliating Uncle Elmer's star, Waylon Wilkie, during filming. He soon landed the lead on Ted Silverberg's television show, Monster Man; however, the series was canned mid-season after the Thing, unhappy about Monster Man being based on him, discovered the alien Xemnu was using the show as a means of mind control. When the Avengers reorganized and reduced their roster again, Simon quit the team and departed with fellow ex-Avenger Hercules, who offered to introduce him to Hollywood directors and producers.

Hercules' contacts proved unreliable and Simon remained in New York, struggling to pay his rent. When the Vision lost an arm, Simon provided an energy transfusion which saved his life, battling the Grim Reaper yet again as a result. Simon's career finally turned around when his agent booked him on a popular network talk show, on the condition that Simon brought along some fellow Avengers; when the show's taping was attacked by rogue inventor Fabian Stankowicz, Simon helped defeat Fabian. A West Coast producer saw Simon in action and tracked him down, locating him soon after he had lost his latest job as a Cordco Incorporated security troubleshooter, offering him stunt work in films such as the unfinished *The Demon That Devoured Hollywood* and *Decimator 2*. Simon soon gained his own fanclub, the Wonderfans, who followed his every career move.

Art by Al Milgrom

Simon relocated to Los Angeles, where Hawkeye invited him to join the Avengers' new West Coast roster. Dividing his time between his movie career and battling menaces such as the Blank, Graviton and Maelstrom, Simon also helped talk the Vision out of staging a benevolent takeover of the world's computer networks. Soon afterward, the Avengers overturned Dr. Doom's own brief conquest of the world, largely because Wonder Man proved immune to the mind-control pheromones of Doom's pawn, the Purple Man. Eric returned, plotting to copy both Simon and the Vision's minds, delete all but the shared memories, and then download this "pure" Simon into a zombie surgically altered to resemble a pre-superhuman Simon. Confronting the Reaper alongside Vision, Wonder Man finally convinced Eric that he was the real Simon by revealing he knew Eric had falsely taken the blame for Simon's embezzling; fleeing in shame, Eric fell to his death, but soon returned as a zombie to plague Simon anew.

Craving absolution, Simon confessed his embezzlement on television. His confidence was boosted by the public's favorable response, and as a result of his newfound fame, he was offered the role of leading villain in the A-list movie *Arkon IV*. The normally insecure Simon became cocky and arrogant, no longer willing to play second string either on screen or off. His ego caused problems when he repeatedly challenged both Hawkeye and Iron Man's leadership during a time travel mission, and he considered quitting the Avengers. Returning home, Simon drew unwanted attention from the hell-lord Mephisto when the demon clashed with the Avengers and X-Men; Mephisto noted Simon's immortal status and stained soul with interest. Simon finally regained some perspective after defeating Tyrannus (in the Abomination's body), only to find his show biz peers assuming it had been a publicity stunt. Humbled, Simon stayed on with the Avengers, battling Yetrigar, Eastern European villains, the High Evolutionary's Sensors, the Night Shift and Super-Nova.

Meanwhile, Immortus was manipulating events to turn the Scarlet Witch into his reality-altering tool. The coalition of intelligence agencies "Vigilance" kidnapped and disassembled the Vision; he was quickly rebuilt, but his mind had been wiped. Partly because he was secretly in love with Vision's wife, Simon refused to let his brain be used as a template to restore the android's personality. Wanda was enraged at his decision, and Simon felt increasingly guilty as a series of new misfortunes further traumatized her, notably the loss of her children. Hoping to ease her pain, Simon agreed to let his brain patterns be replicated; however, the now-emotionless Vision rejected the offer, noting this would merely create a new copy of Simon, not restore the old Vision. Descending into outright criminal insanity under the influence of her father Magneto, Wanda turned on the Avengers, seemingly killing Simon, then restoring him to life and sexually assaulting him. Believing Wanda was finally ready for his purposes, Immortus revealed himself and his plans, only to have them thwarted when the witch Agatha Harkness restored Wanda's sanity. Simon was supportive of Wanda during her subsequent recovery, but she eventually made it clear that his romantic interest in her was not mutual, and relations between them became tenser.

Art by Al Milgrom

Under the watchful eye of his agent Neal Saroyan, Simon got parts in films such

Art by Don Heck

as *Damage Control: The Movie*, but "serious" roles still eluded him. Neal set him up with both an unwanted sidekick, Spider, and a fake girlfriend, Ginger Beach, though Simon was more interested in screenwriter Alex Flores. Regarding Simon as a threat to her operations, would-be LA crimelord Lotus Newmark swore to destroy him. When a Kree/Shi'ar interstellar war menaced Earth, the Avengers intervened; during the conflict, Simon tried and failed to disarm a Nega-Bomb, but its detonation wiped out much of the Kree Empire. Caught in the blast, Simon and Vision survived, but the radiation mutated Simon's powers, which became unstable. Returning to Earth, he began leaking ionic energy, unintentionally empowering the rage-filled Angkor and eight of his own friends and neighbors, including Spider, Ginger and Alex. Simon's eight empowered associates briefly formed the crimefighting Crazy 8. Simon had to kill Angkor to stop him, embracing his own rage and learning that it fueled his unstable powers.

Art by Jeff Johnson

Wonder Man quit the Avengers and was going to give up acting, but changed his mind when Neal promised him the lead in a big-screen version of *Hamlet*, unaware Lotus had arranged it to get Simon out of LA while she took over. When the Crazy 8 opposed her, Lotus sent Splice and Rampage to kill them. Simon returned in time to save most of his friends, but Alex was critically injured, forcing Simon to reconsider his recent actions. Mephisto then assailed Simon with illusions and fake memories to weaken his will; one illusion revealed how Lotus had been involved in much of Simon's recent woes. Mephisto's ambitious son, Blackheart, interfered, and alongside Eric, Simon became a pawn in both their games and was drawn into Hell, but Simon ultimately rejected both demons, and convinced Blackheart to heal Alex. Back on Earth, he reabsorbed his ionic energy from the Crazy 8, stripping most of them of their powers. Soon after, he and Alex became engaged. Learning the Avengers' western roster had disbanded in his absence, Simon joined Iron Man's new Force Works group, only to be targeted by Kree forces blaming him for the Nega-bomb disaster. When the Kree's ion cannon ruptured during this battle, Simon carried it into space to save Earth, but was apparently killed when it exploded.

Simon survived as discorporated energy, holding onto life through his love for Wanda. When the sorceress Morgan Le Fay used Wanda as a conduit to reshape the world, the imprisoned Wanda reached out for help, and her powers re-formed Simon as pure ionic energy. He helped defeat Morgan, and over the next few months Wanda summoned him repeatedly, each time finding it easier, until he manifested to protect her even when she was rendered unconscious. A ghostly Grim Reaper raised Simon and other dead Avengers, compelling them to attack the living Avengers, but Wanda restored the dead heroes' true personalities and they turned against Eric. Also, by finally accepting her own long-repressed love for Simon, Wanda restored him to full life; he, in turn, resurrected Eric. Simon began working with the Avengers again but declined fully active status, feeling unworthy of the group and his new life due to his various past misdeeds and mistakes.

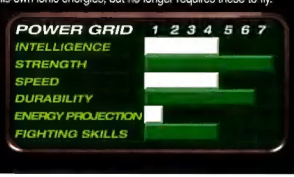
Simon's new romance with Wanda strained his relationship with the Vision, who had recently regained his capacity for emotion, including his feelings for her. Simon also felt guilty over unfinished business left from before he died, notably his engagement to Alex. Accompanied by the Beast, he returned to LA to make amends but found nobody blamed him, and he discovered Alex was happily married. After apprehending Lotus, Simon met his fan Cindy Knutz, who told him how much he had changed her life; inspired by this, Simon set up a non-profit Second Chances foundation to help those overwhelmed by circumstances beyond their control. Returning from LA, he was ambushed by Count Nefaria, now both an ionic being and an energy vampire; Nefaria took control of both Simon and Atlas (Erik Josten), planning to explode a Nega-bomb which would turn humanity into ionic beings upon whom he could feast. Simon and Atlas escaped his control in time to carry the bomb into space, and this time Simon survived the explosion. Simon moved to LA, the long-distance relationship eventually ending his involvement with Wanda.

He accepted a challenge to reform the assassin Lady Killer, unaware this was part of a ploy by his former agent Neal Saroyan, secretly head of the Nobility assassins' group, to destroy the Avengers. Simon's charge, renamed Ladyfair, accompanied him to an Avengers party, where Neal had her poison the drinks; however, she resisted Neal's control long enough to prevent anyone imbibing, and committed suicide to escape Neal's control. Simon flew to LA to confront Neal, but found him already slain by his own people. After the Super-human Registration Act was passed, Simon teamed with Ms. Marvel and others to battle anti-registration rebels, helping capture his former teammate Arachne. Intelligence agency SHIELD also blackmailed him into helping them investigate Atlantean subversives during the conflict. In the aftermath of this Civil War, Simon has joined Iron Man's new Avengers.

Art by Andrew Currie

HEIGHT: 6'2"
WEIGHT: 380 lbs.
EYES: Red (permeated with shifting spots of ionic energy, no visible irises); formerly gray
HAIR: Gray, sometimes dyed black

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Wonder Man's ionic energy-permeated body possesses greatly enhanced strength, durability, reflexes and stamina; he can lift in excess of 100 tons, is impervious to virtually any form of penetration wound, and does not tire. He does not require food, water or air, and does not age. He can fly at speeds in excess of 700 mph, or leap hundreds of feet from a standing jump. For a time, he shifted into an energy form while using his powers, but his conventional physical form now seems to be his constant state. During past periods when his powers were destabilized, his strength increased when angry, and he could alter his physical appearance, grow to giant stature, fire energy beams from his eyes, explode and reform at will, and empower others with ionic energy; he has apparently lost these abilities for now. He can control his internal energy flux to make his eyes appear normal temporarily; his eyesight extends beyond the normal human visible spectrum, and his hearing is also enhanced. He formerly wore a rocket belt or jetpack powered by his own ionic energies, but no longer requires these to fly.



THE YAKUZA

AFFILIATED GROUPS: Aizukotetsu-kai, Blue Monkey Gang, Clan Dai-Kumo, Clan Orii, Clan Tatsu, Clan Yashida, Double Jade Clan, Dragon Clan, Ichiwa-kai, Inagawa-kai, Kanto-kai, Red Dragon Clan, Shitei-otaku, Sumiyoshi-kai, Tosei-kai, Yamaguchi-gumi
FIRST APPEARANCE: Shogun Warriors #15 (1980)

THE BOSS
(deceased), Former Oyabun of Aizukotetsu-kai

LORD DAI-KUMO
(deceased), Former Oyabun of Clan Dai-Kumo

SILVER SAMURAI
(Kenuichio Harada), Oyabun of Clan Yashida

IEYASU IMURA
Oyabun of the Dragon Clan

LORD KENADA
Oyabun of Tosei-kai

SHINJI KIZAKI
Oyabun of Yamaguchi-gumi

MAIKERU MISHU
Former Oyabun of Yamaguchi-gumi

PALE FLOWER
(Shinohana), Oyabun of the Double Jade Clan

LORD SHINGEN
(deceased), Former Oyabun of Clan Yashida

LORD SHIRO
Oyabun of the Red Dragon Clan

LORD TATSU'O
Oyabun of Clan Tatsu

NABATÔNE YAKUSE
(deceased), Former Oyabun of Tosei-kai

MARIKO YASHIDA
(deceased), Former Oyabun of Clan Yashida

KENZO ORII
(deceased), Former Oyabun of Clan Orii

HISTORY: The Yakuza traces its earliest roots back to the familial samurai clans of ancient Japan, founded to protect their members from those who would oppress or exploit them. Clan Yashida is perhaps the oldest and most well-known of the familial clans. The ancestral seat of Clan Yashida is in Miyago Prefecture, roughly 300 kilometers north of Tokyo, nestled in the hills above the port city of Agrashima on the main Japanese island of Honshu. Just prior to the first millennium, demonic elementals began imparting arcane knowledge to Clan Yashida's sages and mystics, convincing them to open a portal to Hell so they could summon the Doombringer — a demon who would end life on Earth and allow them to become supreme rulers of Hell. To accomplish this, members of Clan Yashida traveled to Thailand, where they attempted to summon the Doombringer in the temple-fortress complex of Tangkor Marat; however, a group of rival mystics learned of Clan Yashida's apocalyptic plans and performed a spell that suspended time within Tangkor Marat just before the Doombringer was about to arrive on Earth. Eight hundred years ago, the supreme swordsmith Masamune used meteorite iron to forge Clan Yashida's "Honor Sword," which was believed to represent the spiritual and physical perfection that the Clan strives for; the Honor Sword is wielded not by the Clan's lord, but by the samurai who best exemplifies those qualities.

The rise of the modern-day Yakuza began as early as Japan's feudal era, when many samurai, who traditionally provided service as professional soldiers during wartime and as professional bureaucrats during peacetime, lost their connection to the land and started to live around the feudal castles; these masterless samurai (or "ronin") acted as either bandits or freelance soldiers. The modern-day Yakuza gangs did not arise until after Japan became an imperialist power in the late 19th century, as militant right-wing nationalism began to play an important role in domestic politics and many gang members began to form a militant wing of Japanese politics known as uyoku. During the post-World War II rationing period, the Yakuza controlled the Japanese black market and moved into controlling major sea ports as well as the entertainment industry, as various Yakuza factions began competing with each other for power and prestige.

In the years after World War II, the Yakuza leader known only as "the Boss" began building a power base, eventually becoming an oyabun in the powerful Kyoto-based Aizukotetsu-kai federation. Over the years, the Boss employed an assassin known as the Oyakata, a champion sumo wrestler who operated his own training stable; but, as insurance, the Boss hired Deadpool ("Wade Wilson") to infiltrate the Oyakata's training stable as a sleeper agent in case he ever needed the assassin eliminated. Deadpool studied under the Oyakata for three years; but when the Boss finally ordered the Oyakata's assassination, Deadpool could not complete the assignment and disappeared.

In recent years, Maikeru Mishu — then the maverick oyabun of the Kobe's powerful Yamaguchi-gumi gang — plotted to seize the Shogun Warriors, giant combat robots created by the reclusive secret society known as the Followers of the Light. Mishu had the Followers' agent Richard Carson abducted and replaced by an imposter (Mishu's operative Sakanoe) who infiltrated the Followers' hidden Sanctuary base. Drugging Carson's fellow agents to reduce their effectiveness, Sakanoe commandeered Carson's Raydeen robot and fought the other Shoguns while Mishu led his gangsters in storming the Sanctuary, but the Followers and their agents ultimately succeeded in capturing Mishu, Sakanoe, and the rest of the gang, brainwashing them into forgetting everything they knew about the Followers. This bizarre failure presumably played a part in Mishu's subsequent removal as oyabun.

While the modern Yakuza gangs and most of the familial clans have focused on organized crime, the Dragon Clan instead focused on the original precepts of the clans: to protect the powerless from those who would oppress and exploit them, waging a clandestine war against the more well-known Yakuza gangsters. In recent decades, Dragon Clan member Ieyasu "Sam" Imura built a secret Japanese manor headquarters under Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, from which he continued the Dragon Clan's activities. Lieutenant Sabrina "Bree" Morrel of the San Francisco Police Department's Homicide Division joined the Dragon Clan to help people outside the confines of the law. Imura and Morrel convinced Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew) to prevent the Deterrence Research Corporation's planned assassination of the Kingpin (Wilson Fisk) and General Nguyen Coy of Madripoor, although Spider-Woman later declined to join the Dragon Clan because she disapproved of their methods.

Meanwhile, led by Lord Shingen, Clan Yashida spent decades building an illegal heroin smuggling organization, becoming one of Japan's most politically-influential clans and nearly seizing control of all Yakuza gangs. Lord Shingen had forced his daughter Mariko Yashida to marry Noburu-Hideki of the Tokyo-based Tosei-kai gang in order to satisfy a debt Shingen had incurred. When the Canadian mutant Wolverine (James Howlett), who had fallen in love with Mariko, began single-handedly dismantling Clan Yashida's illegal operations, Lord Shingen made a deal with the Hand to assassinate him. Wolverine eventually killed Lord Shingen in a one-on-one confrontation, while Shingen's rogue assassin Yukio slew Noburu-Hideki. Rather than killing Wolverine in revenge as the honor system demanded, Mariko instead bestowed the Honor Sword upon him, renouncing her father's criminal ways. As Shingen's first born, Mariko inherited his title as Lord of Clan Yashida and planned to wed Wolverine ten months after her father's death.

Aided by the Hydra agent Viper, Lady Mariko's half-brother Silver Samurai (Kenuichio Harada) sought to gain control of Clan Yashida. Nabatõne Yakuse, oyabun of the Tosei-kai gang, agreed to arbitrate the conflict between Mariko and Silver Samurai. Unknown to Lady Mariko, however, Yakuse had recently died at his estate outside Tokyo, and the "Yakuse" serving as arbitrator was actually the mind-manipulating mutant Mastermind (Jason Wyndgarde) posing as the oyabun. Wolverine and the X-Men foiled Silver Samurai's attempts to eliminate his half-sister, but Lady Mariko soon fell under the control of Mastermind's psychic powers and left Wolverine at the altar, claiming that he was not worthy of her. Manipulated into strengthening the Clan's ties to the Japanese underworld, Mariko named the Silver Samurai as her heir and accepted Wolverine's return of the Clan's Honor Sword.

Even after Professor X (Charles Xavier) reversed the psychic damage done to Lady Mariko by Mastermind, Silver Samurai kept the Clan Yashida Honor Sword and controlled a faction of Clan Yashida for a time, maintaining the Clan's ties to organized crime. During this period, an earthquake in Thailand freed one of the ancient Clan Yashida members who had been frozen in time while trying to summon the Doombringer at the dawn of the first millennium. This time-displaced samurai archer convinced twenty of Silver Samurai's men to accompany him to Thailand to reverse the time-suspension spell and release the Doombringer. Silver Samurai and Wolverine reluctantly joined forces to stop the rogue Clan Yashida members and destroy the Doombringer. Eventually reunifying Clan Yashida under her leadership, Mariko returned the Honor Sword to Wolverine, although she felt that she was now unworthy of marrying him until she severed all of Clan Yashida's ties to the Japanese underworld.

As Lady Mariko struggled to divest Clan Yashida of its criminal holdings, Lord Tatsu'o (the "Dragon Lord"), oyabun of the rival Clan Tatsu, outfitted five of his highest-ranking kobun with cybernetic implants, dubbing them his "Cybersamurai." Eventually learning of his long-lost granddaughter's existence, Tatsu'o orchestrated the abduction of Opal Tanaka, who was living in New York City and dating Iceman (Robert Drake), in an attempt to continue his family lineage by forcing her to wed one of his Cybersamurai. The X-Men traveled to Japan and joined forces with Lady Mariko and her agents, assaulting Lord Tatsu'o's ancestral stronghold and rescuing Tanaka. Later, when Lady Mariko steered youthful American heroes the New Warriors into attacking a Clan Tatsu heroin shipment, the Warriors defeated the Cybersamurai and destroyed the drugs, though Tatsu'o talked the Warriors out of pursuing further action by agreeing to supply Warriors leader Night Thrasher with useful information.

Led by oyabun Lord Dai-Kumo, the Osaka-based Clan Dai-Kumo became heavily involved in drug manufacture and trafficking. While on the island-nation of Madripoor, Wolverine (in his guise as "Patch") fought Clan Dai-Kumo henchmen who sought to eliminate him so he could not interfere in their plan to export Madripoorian spider-monkeys to Japan, where the hypothalamic fluid found in their brains could be used to create Raiden the Thunderbolt, a highly-refined designer drug that inhibits fear and pain and temporarily grants superhuman strength and endurance (with addictive and often lethal side-effects). Left for dead, Wolverine recovered, tracked Clan Dai-Kumo back to Osaka, and infiltrated Lord Dai-Kumo's mansion. As Wolverine destroyed Dai-Kumo's illegal drug operations, Lord Dai-Kumo's own assassin Reiko turned against him and slew the oyabun so she could escape his servitude. With Lord Dai-Kumo dead, his daughter, Pale Flower (Shirohana), was forced to relocate from Osaka to Tokyo, where she eventually became the oyabun of the Double Jade Clan and gained control over all gambling activities in Tokyo's Shinjuku District. The Double Jade Clan soon became the sworn enemy of Clan Yashida.

Gangster Matsu'o Tsurayaba eventually gained control over a faction of Hand ninja and sought to eliminate his competition in the Japanese underworld. After unsuccessfully attempting to assassinate Wolverine and Gambit (Remy LeBeau) in Tokyo's Ropongi District, he had his Hand ninjas assault the Yashida mansion compound. During the assault, Tsurabaya deployed his newest assassin, Reiko, whom he had blinded, promising to restore her eyesight after she completed her mission. He sent Reiko to infiltrate the compound and kill Lady Mariko by offering to have Tsurayaba purchase all of Clan Yashida's criminal holdings at fair market value if Lady Mariko cut off her finger with Reiko's dagger, which was secretly coated in deadly blowfish toxin. As Lady Mariko succumbed to the toxin, Reiko committed suicide upon learning that Mariko was Wolverine's true love. At Lady Mariko's request, Wolverine killed her so that she did not have to endure her final moments of suffering. With Clan Yashida finally divested of its criminal holdings, Silver Samurai became the new oyabun, eventually agreeing to provide financial support for Wolverine's foster daughter Amiko Kobayashi and receiving Clan Yashida's Honor Sword from Wolverine in return.

Shortly after, the German-based terrorist known as the Baroness (Heike Zemo) traveled to Tokyo's Ginza District, where she met with Tosei-kai gang oyabun Lord Kenada and paid him for the services of his premiere assassin, the mutant White Ninja; the White Ninja stole the powerful Cassidy Crystals from Osborn Industries, although Spider-Man (Peter Parker) and Silver Sable ultimately foiled the Baroness' plans for world domination.

In an attempt to obtain the legendary Grasscutter Sword, a perfect blade rumored to have originated in the stomach of the Serpent of Koshi at the dawn of time, the Hand confronted Kaori Tamayoshi, a member of the family who had served as swordsmiths for Clan Yashida for centuries, in Tokyo's Kabuchiko District. The immortal warrior known as Black Axe came to Kaori's rescue and defeated the Hand with the help of Sunfire (Lady Mariko's mutant cousin Shiro Yoshida).

In the United States, the Red Dragon Clan had established a foothold in New York City. Under the control of oyabun Lord Shiro, however, the Red Dragon Clan began to splinter as some of its members formed their own organization. Meanwhile, a former Red Dragon Clan associate known as Karl Powers became an FBI informant and jeopardized the activities of both the main Clan and the splinter group. The FBI hired Nightwing Restorations to protect their witness; meanwhile, Lord Shiro hired Sabretooth (Victor Creed) to assassinate Karl Powers. Accompanied by a team of Red Dragon ninja, Sabretooth attempted to complete his mission but was defeated by Iron Fist.

Back in Tokyo, the Shikei-otaku, one of the many youth-based motorcycle gangs ("speed tribes") involved in Yakuza activities, were killed by the Masters of Silence, who had been hired by the parents of the gang members to kill their sons for bringing dishonor upon their families. Similarly, the superhuman assassin Deathtoll (Saint van Sant) was hired to kill a faction of the Inagawa-kai Yakuza gang in Yokohama, Japan.

Afterward, while visiting his foster-daughter Amiko in Tokyo, Wolverine learned that Amiko and Yukio had been abducted by the Hand. Wanted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department for questioning in the disappearance of Yukio and Amiko, Wolverine sought refuge in a gambling hall operated by the Double Jade Clan in Tokyo's Shinjuku District. Double Jade Clan oyabun Pale Flower initially welcomed him, but since Wolverine had helped ruin her father, she tried unsuccessfully to kill him in revenge. Both Wolverine and Pale Flower were arrested and held in Tokyo's Shinjuku District Police Station, where Clan Yashida's head enforcer Yohei arrived at the request of Silver Samurai to deliver the Clan's Honor Sword to Wolverine. After escaping prison and being attacked by members of the Yakuza-affiliated Blue Monkey Gang, who believed Clan Yashida was infiltrating their Tokyo Waterfront territory, Wolverine, Pale Flower and Yohei set out to Akatora Island in Tokyo Bay, where the Hand was brainwashing Amiko. After rescuing Yukio and Amiko, Wolverine destroyed Yohei, who he learned was a Hand sleeper agent infiltrating Clan Yashida.

The Boss of Kyoto's Aizukotetsu-kai federation eventually obtained a blood sample from his former assassin Deadpool, used it to create a miniature clone known as "Widdle Wade," and finally sent him to kill the Oyakata after extensive training, only to cancel the assignment days before the assassination was to take place. Unable to make himself stop a job before it was complete, Widdle Wade became mentally unhinged and went rogue. The Boss hired the original Deadpool to stop Widdle Wade before he assassinated the Oyakata. Deadpool eventually killed his clone and later killed the Boss aboard his private yacht.

Japan's Yakuza gangs next came under assault from Clan Kaishek, a Mongolian crime family who were court advisors to Kublai Khan in the 13th century and began accumulating power by stealing from the tributes paid to the Mongol Empire. Ruled by Yolyn Kaishek from his tower-fortress in modern-day Mongolia, Clan Kaishek was also controlled in part by Yolyn's sons, Gom and Haan, and his daughter, Kia, who had relocated to Japan in order to expand their empire's holdings. After Haan's men defeated Silver Samurai and claimed Clan Yashida in the name of Clan Kaishek, Kia began playing her brothers against each other to solidify her own power base. She manipulated Haan into killing Gom and then killed Haan herself, framing Wolverine for his murder. Returning to Mongolia to assassinate her father and become sole ruler of Clan Kaishek, Kia was tracked by Yukio, Wolverine and Silver Samurai and killed in an explosion that destroyed Fortress Kaishek. Deeply affected by the near-takeover of Clan Yashida, Silver Samurai renounced his duties as Clan leader.

The mercenary Zaran the Weapons Master kidnapped Amiko and brought her to his private island in the South China Sea in order to lure Wolverine into a one-on-one confrontation. Zaran invited the Yamaguchi-gumi gang's new oyabun, Shinji Kizaki, in hopes of proving himself worthy to serve in Kizaki's employment. After Wolverine defeated Zaran, Kizaki returned Amiko to Wolverine, but ordered Wolverine's death because he deemed him to be a future potential threat to his operations. Wolverine defeated Kizaki's ninja bodyguards and spared Kizaki's life at Amiko's request before fleeing the island.

In America, shortly after Daredevil (Matt Murdock) publicly defeated the Kingpin and declared himself the new kingpin of New York's Hell's Kitchen/Clinton neighborhood, Clan Orii moved in on the Kingpin's former territory. Sano Ren Orii, the son of the Clan's oyabun, Lord Kenzo Orii, who was currently functioning as head of the Clan's Philadelphia crime cartel, called in Clan Orii's henchmen from the West Coast in an attempt to establish a foothold in Hell's Kitchen. Using an old hideout of the Owl (Leland Owlsey) at New York's West Harbor, Clan Orii began laundering money and producing Mutant Growth Hormone (MGH) for sale on the streets. Attacking Murdock, Sano and his henchmen were defeated by the hero and arrested by the FBI. Sano bribed his way out of federal custody and orchestrated FBI Agent Driver's death with a car bomb. Returning to his plans of assassinating Matt Murdock and filling the power vacuum left in the Kingpin's absence, Sano and his gang were preemptively attacked by Daredevil, Luke Cage, Iron Fist, and Spider-Man. Delivered to the New York Police Department, Sano confessed to his crimes and was sentenced to 99 years in prison for Driver's murder. Clan Orii moved its base of East Coast operations to Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Seeking control of Japan's underworld, the cybernetic Lady Deathstrike (Yuriko Oyama) erased Silver Samurai's memories of the past four years, regressing him to a point where he still aspired to control Japan's criminal gangs. When several of Japan's most powerful oyabun held a secret meeting in Tokyo's Sagacho District to determine who breached the Yakuza honor code by leaking information to the public about the inner workings of Clan Yashida, Silver Samurai arrived and killed the oyabun. Renaming himself the "Silver Shogun," the Samurai called for a city-wide gang truce and held a special meeting at Mikado Cabaret in Tokyo's Asakusa Rokku District, where he announced his plans to unite all of Japan's Yakuza gangs under his rule: the "Yashida-kai." Later, elite intelligence agency SHIELD abducted the sleeping Samurai from his own private plane, imprisoned him in the secure super-villain prison known as the Raft in New York City, and declared him officially dead; however, he soon escaped during a break-out and returned to Japan on a plane supplied by the Hand, who told him they were Japanese Secret Service agents acting on behalf of the Prime Minister.

American super-hero team the Avengers, fearing that the fugitive Silver Samurai would be reinstalled as Lord of Clan Yashida to do the Hand's bidding, sent their agent Ronin (Maya Lopez) to Osaka, where she saw Silver Samurai secretly meeting with the Hand jonin Kuroda and Hydra's Viper. The Hand and Hydra wanted Silver Samurai to reclaim leadership of Clan Yashida so they could stabilize Japan's underworld and build a power base against SHIELD. The Avengers confronted Silver Samurai, who assured them that he would not transform Clan Yashida into an organization that America would fear, although he did inform the public about his questionable treatment by SHIELD.

Meanwhile, the powerful Chaeyi – a secretive international organization dedicated to destabilizing national governments for profit – hired Clan Orii to obtain materials needed to print counterfeit U.S. immigration documents for their agents. Granted parole thanks to Chaeyi's influence, Sano Orii was placed in charge of the operation, using his connections with U.S. State Department Consular Officer Jessup Pyne to procure the necessary government materials. Accompanied by the Chaeyi's superhuman mercenary Cobra (Piet Voorhees), Sano soon ran afoul of the vigilante White Tiger (Angela del Toro) when he reestablished Clan Orii's stronghold in New York's Upper East Side and affiliated himself with a gang local to del Toro's neighborhood. Sano clashed repeatedly with the White Tiger until Kenzo Orii, Sano's father and oyabun of Clan Orii, came to New York to correct his son's mismanagement of the clan's U.S. operations. When Pyne delivered his final shipment of blank immigration documents and expressed a desire to end his association with Clan Orii, Sano killed him. Soon after, White Tiger and several other super heroes assaulted Clan Orii's stone mansion on the Upper West Side's Riverside Drive during a transaction of counterfeit green cards and passports. In the ensuing battle, Sano unintentionally shot Kenzo while the latter was fighting White Tiger, instantly killing him. With the rest of their Yakuza gang apprehended by the assembled heroes, Sano committed suicide using a wakizashi sword to atone for his father's murder, as demanded by the honor system.

Most recently, Ronin continued to battle the Yakuza's activities in Japan, where she was eventually killed by Hand agents who mystically resurrected her in hopes of making her a brainwashed Hand assassin, but the Avengers liberated her.